ESSAYS

ON

CHRISTIANITY.

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ESSAYS

ON THE

EVIDENCE,

CHARACTERISTIC DOCTRINES,

AND

INFLUENCE

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

By the Rev. THOMAS HAWEIS, L. L. B.
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PREFACE.

WHILST the rapid progreſs of infidelity appears to be the natural and neceſſary conſequence of prevailing diſſipation, it becomes at leaſt the miniſters of the ſanctuary to ſtand on the Lord's ſide,

and lift up the goſpel ſtandard, againſt the floods of ungodlineſs.

In the eyes of unbelievers indeed revelation is deſpiſed, and faith treated as folly. Yet after the moſt attentive conſideration of the ſubject I am conſtrained to avow, that in every thing which affects the beſt intereſts of mankind, there are deeper traces of wiſdom in Moſes and the Prophets than in the admired treatiſes

tiſes of Plato or Ariſtotle, and richer treaſures of knowledge in the writings of the fiſhermen of Galilee than in all the volumes of poets and philoſophers antient or modern.

Theſe ſages of antiquity indeed have left us their various ſyſtems of ethics and theology, the monuments of the boaſted powers of reaſon, and demonſtration of its weakneſs. Around this

this glow-worm light the moderns aſſemble, and collecting the ſcattered ſparks turn from the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſen with healing in his wings. Beautifully, awfully doth the prophet Iſaiah pour contempt on their abortive efforts. "Behold all ye "that kindle a fire, that compaſs "yourſelves about with ſparks, "walk in the light of your fire, "and in the ſparks that ye have "kindled, this ſhall ye have of

"mine

" mine hand, ye ſhall lie down
" in ſorrow."

The profeſſed object of a philoſopher is truth, of a chriſtian the truth as it is in Jeſus. No longer wandering in the labyrinths of conjecture, and ſcience falſely ſo called, the Light of Life is riſen to guide our feet into the paths of eternal life. If we refuſe to hear Him that ſpeaketh from Heaven, and

chuſe

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chuſe darkneſs rather than light, we ſhall be without excuſe in the day of God. "To the Word "therefore and to the Teſtimo- "ny."

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ESSAY I.

ON DIVINE REVELATION.

SUPPOSING the exiſtence of God, it is impoſſible to deny that he may, and moſt probably would, communicate to men, ſome notices of his will. The relation, in which they ſtand towards him as creatures, ſeems to require it; eſpecially, if without ſuch communication we ſhould be

found incapable of knowing him and the obedience which we owe him.

That every man's reaſon and natural conſcience are ſufficient to inſtruct him in the knowledge of God and his obligations to him, hath been aſſerted, but with what colour of truth remains to be proved. It is evident "The world by wiſdom "knew not God."* And this not only appears, from the expreſs teſtimony of the ſcriptures, but is verified by univerſal experience. The conduct of mankind in every age and every nation, where divine revelation hath not ſhined, affords a complete

* 1 Cor. i. 21.

complete demonſtration of the inſufficiency of man's reaſon, and natural conſcience to inſtruct him concerning his duty to God, and his fellow creatures, or to engage him to fulfil it.

Whoever conſiders the ſtate of the wiſeſt men in the heathen world, improved by all the collected light, which philoſophy could caſt upon their minds, muſt at preſent be ſtruck with pity, at the ſtrange ignorance, abſurdities, and contradictions, manifeſt in their writings, reſpecting the gods, which they admitted—the duties, which they owed them—the worſhip to be paid them—the boundaries of vice and virtue—and the

rewards and punishments annexed to these. Their most admired treatises proclaim their painful doubts, and uncertainties, with regard to objects, the most momentuous and interesting, the immortality of their souls, and the world to come. And though sometimes rising above the deluge of vulgar idolatry, some noble sentiments escape them, they remain still floating on the vast abyss of scepticism; without compass to guide them, or any certain port in view.

Nor have their modern followers (indebted as they are, for all their superior attainments, to that very revelation, which they so ungratefully blaspheme,) produced any thing

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more ſatisfactory though perhaps more plauſible than their predeceſſors. When carefully examined, their reaſonings furniſh no more ſolid ground for confidence, but after bewildering us in labyrinths of ſophiſtry, they ultimately leave us, juſt where they found us, "groping for "the wall as blind." Unleſs following theſe maſters of reaſoning, to the full extent of their argument, we at laſt perceive ourſelves advanced, to that higheſt ſummit of infidel wiſdom, daringly to conclude, as "the fool hath ſaid in his heart, that "there is no God."*

* Pſalm xiv. 1.

The imbecility of the human underſtanding, and the univerſal prevalence of evil, have evidently appeared to call for ſome divine interpoſition, in order to give more certain information to the minds of men, reſpecting God and his will, and to ſuggeſt ſome powerful means and motives, to ſtem the prevailing torrent of iniquity. And for this, I ſhall not here appeal to prophets or apoſtles, but to an authority, which unbelievers reſpect with higher reverence, the immortal Plato.

The heathen legiſlators unanimouſly thought, and wiſely too, that it was neceſſary for them to call in ſuperior aſſiſtance, and that every regulation

regulation which they enjoined, would be moſt effectually accompliſhed, if enforced, by the authority of revelation.

From the nymph Egeria to the pigeon of Mahomet, the claim to ſupernatural inſtruction hath been made by all, who affecting to diſtinguiſh themſelves, as the teachers and reformers of mankind, have produced a ſyſtem of religious principles, as eſſential to enforce the practices, which they recommended.

Amidſt the multitude of revelations, which the craft of men hath invented, and the credulity of mankind hath embraced, one

truth appears evident, viz. that a real diſcovery of the true God—his nature and attributes—a clear and deciſive direction for the regulation of the conſcience and conduct—and the certain immortality of man, in a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments, would be ſupremely deſireable, and eſſentially beneficial to the beſt intereſts of humanity.

The manifold, contradictory, abſurd, and often impious ſyſtems, which have been advanced by deſigning and ambitious impoſtors have given juſt occaſion to hold in utter contempt, the general pretenſions to revelation. Men of ſenſe and reaſon could

could not, on examination, but be offended with palpable falſhoods, and frauds, obvious to detection: they could not therefore but reject, what it was impoſſible for them to believe: for no revelation deſerves to be received, as coming from God, but ſuch as brings along with it, evidence completely ſatisfactory; or ſuch at leaſt, as leaves thoſe without excuſe, who refuſe to be convinced.

It is our mercy that ſuch a revelation hath appeared, and challenges enquiry—-attended with evidence of its divine Origin, which no other ſyſtem of religion ever produced—and communicating truths

of ſuch a nature, as carry their own conviction along with them,—truths, in excellence as tranſcendently above all, that proud philoſophy ever affected to teach, as in evidence, they will be found ſuperior to all the cavils of the moſt invenomed adverſaries.

The chriſtian revelation demands examination, and they are inexcuſable, who either reject it without trying the force of the arguments by which it is ſupported; or ſatisfied with ſuperficial enquires adopt the ridicule, or retail the miſrepreſentations of its enemies.

A man, who has never attentively read the bible, *the whole book*, cannot poſſibly be a competent judge of its contents, on the mere report of others; and that too, of its avowed blaſphemers: yet of the multitudes, who venture to reject the goſpel diſpenſation, how few have been at the pains to examine with diligence and candour, the revelation, which they preſume to deſpiſe?---In no other caſe, would they for the credit of their underſtanding, decide upon report, or hazard a judgment without the needful enquiry: In a matter of ſuch amazing magnitude, where their everlaſting all is at ſtake, to do it without proper inveſtigation, muſt leave men without excuſe.

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The chriſtian religion then, whilſt it claims reception, challenges examination. It brings with it proofs of a divine Original, to which no impoſtor ever dared to appeal; at leaſt, with no ſuch evidence of reality, and truth, as this affords.

Beſides the miracles wrought, and the prophecies fulfilled, in confirmation of the divine Original of the bible, the volume itſelf contains ſuch diſcoveries of Jehovah, and our duty to him—inculcates ſuch purity of heart and life—and leads to ſuch bleſſedneſs, as carries internal evidence to the conſcience of the ſource from whence it flows.

That

That impoſtors, to ſupport their pretenſions to revelation, have appealed to miracles, is admitted; but what kind of miracles, and by what proof ſupported? If their pretenſions be examined, it muſt appear to be the heighth of diſingenuity, to bring theſe, into compare, or competition, with thoſe recorded in the bible. The miracles of Moſes, and of the greater Prophet, whom he foretold, with thoſe of his diſciples, are ſo many, and ſo great—performed ſo openly—ſo eaſily capable of detection, if fictitious—and which it was ſo much the intereſt and effort of their enemies to bring into diſrepute—Jeſus and his apoſtles were in a line of life, ſo infe-

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rior to their opponents—the whole weight of reputed wiſdom, power, reſpect, was ſo evidently againſt them, that the attempt to impoſe upon their countrymen in ſuch circumſtances, muſt be abſurd, even to madneſs, and expoſe them to detection in every inſtance. But when inſtead of affecting concealment, or ſhrinking from obſervation, in multiplied, daily exertions of ſupernatural powers, openly diſplayed, the blind received their ſight, the deaf heard, the lame walked, the lepers were cleanſed, the dead were raiſed to life.——When all theſe aſtoniſhing facts on the ſpot were appealed to, as proofs of their divine miſſion.—When the prieſts, the ſcribes, and

phariſees,

phariſees, with all their craft, and all their power, and all their malignity were never able, in any one ſingle inſtance, to deny the miracle, or detect impoſition.—When the reputed Son of a carpenter with a few fiſhermen on the one hand ſtood thus, againſt the combined influence of all the eminence, rank, ability, and wealth of the Jewiſh nation, ſupported ſingly by the divine Evidence of the credentials, which they, thus confidently, publicly, in the chief places of concourſe, in the very porch of the Temple, amidſt innumerable ſpectators, produced—viewing all this and much more, which might be ſuggeſted to ſtrengthen the argument, and

which

which every attentive reader of the bible may eaſily collect, where beſides, were ever ſuch pretenſions to real miracles made, and ſupported in ſuch a manner? If credulity is blamable, on whom can it be ſo juſtly, ſo deeply charged as on thoſe, who with all theſe things before their eyes, dare reject the evidence on pretence of improbability! And how much more abſurdly credulous ſtill muſt they be, who reject the revelation, without even examining the arguments, or conſulting the divine oracles; and reſt on the reports, the miſrepreſented reports of others? Of men, not only prejudiced, but inimical— Of men, whoſe conſciences and con-

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duct are ſuch, as to compel them to take refuge in infidelity—who will not believe, becauſe *they dare not*—whoſe lives will leſs endure the purity of the goſpel precepts, than their underſtanding the pretended difficulties of the goſpel doctrines.

The teſtimony of prophecies fulfilled is alſo appealed to in evidence of the divine authority of the ſcriptures.

That God alone can know with certainty future events will I preſume, be admitted. The utmoſt ſtretch of human wiſdom and foreſight can only reach to probable conjecture.

conjecture. To reſt the proof of a divine miſſion upon this, would be very impolitic in any impoſtor, and expoſe him, as hath ever happened to falſe prophets, to contempt and infamy.

To enter into a full diſcuſſion of all the prophecies of the bible, and their fulfilment would lead me beyond the bounds, which I have preſcribed to myſelf. I can with ſatisfaction refer the inquiſitive to the very ingenious biſhop Newton, and others who have written on the prophecies, and ſhall only ſuggeſt two, the one of a particular, the other of a more general nature.

Let any man read the prophecy of Iſaiah,* and hundreds of years before the birth of Cyrus, ſeeing him there by name, by nation, expreſsly declared, as the appointed deliverer of the Jewiſh captives from Babylon—long before Judea appeared in any danger of ſuch captivity—or Media in any eminence of power among the nations—if he can ſuppoſe, ſo many fortuitous circumſtances impoſſible to have been foreſeen, or to have entered into the mind of any human being, or rather ſuch a tiſſue of events, names and ſituations as muſt have been deemed the moſt improbable to have come to paſs, if any man can ſuppoſe

* Iſaiah xliv. 45.

poſe this a lucky conjecture, or that any impoſtor would have riſked the character of his miſſion upon ſuch an event, *he* muſt believe a great deal more than we do.

The diſperſion and diſtinct preſervation of the Jewiſh people, accompliſhed, and to this very day adding increaſing evidence to the truth of prophecy; ſo fully, ſo repeatedly, ſo clearly declared in a variety of places, by different inſpired writers, is an event, ſo extraordinary, ſo unlike whatever happened to any other nation, or indeed in the ordinary courſe of providence ever could happen, that the moſt obſtinate unbelievers are greviouſly

at a loſs to account for it, and obliged to have recourſe to ſuppoſitions, that can only obtain reception from credulity much greater than any which they ſo pointedly ridicule.

Now if in theſe, and ſo great a variety of ſimilar inſtances, in no one particular hath the prophetic word ever failed of its accompliſhment—if its moſt eagle-eyed adverſaries with all their cavils have never yet been able to produce a ſingle inſtance of real falſhood or detection; we appeal to every man of candour, reaſon and reflection, whether to believe, or diſbelieve, deſerves moſt juſtly the cenſure of irrational and credulous. After an attentive inveſti-

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revelation, and thoſe who recei
it, and let the reſult determine, whe
is the mind that hath wiſdom.

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But were theſe evidences of divine atteſtation to revealed truths, brought to ſupport opinions abſurd, or contradictory, or practices, I will not ſay immoral, but even of queſtionable excellence, here would be ground to raiſe objections. Let the book then ſpeak for itſelf, and let no man preſume to decide, till he hath at leaſt, examined it throughout with the attention, which a ſubject ſo momentuous deſerves; if it contains not the moſt ſtriking internal evidence of a divine Original, let it be rejected.

Reſpecting God himſelf, his nature and perfections, what ideas does the bible ſuggeſt! Worthy indeed the

the ſubject and the teacher. What irradiation beams from every page of the ſcriptures! Compare with them all the writings of poets and philoſophers, how contemptible are their deſcriptions, how infinitely unworthy of Jehovah Elohim! as when the conteſt was decided between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, muſt not conviction extort from every candid examiner the glorious confeſſion, "the Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God." For *he*, like the ſun, which he placed in the firmament, can only be known by the light which himſelf diſpenſes, and if there be found in any of the writings of men, ſentiments and ideas worthy

1 Kings, 18. 39.

worthy of God, they appear to be borrowed from the great Fountain of wiſdom, revelation, and, like the fabled Promethean fire, ſtolen from the heavenly repoſitory.

If in the unity of the Godhead, Jehovah reveals himſelf, as ſubſiſting in a mode peculiar to himſelf; where the ſubject is ſo high above mortal conception, that is not to be called abſurd, which tranſcends the meaſure of our capacity, nor incredible, becauſe incomprehenſible. Can any man affirm, that he hath a more adequate idea of the infinite, and eternal, than of the triune God?

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The doctrines and the duties reſulting from the manifeſtation of God to us in his revealed word, are admirably calculated for our preſent ſtate; they have, (as will be hereafter more fully ſhown,) the moſt powerful tendency to remove the fears of guilt from the conſcience—to engage our hearts in the love, and our lives to the practice of the moſt exalted purity—and under the influence of motives, the moſt reaſonable, and moſt alluring, and in the very exerciſe of that obedience, which the goſpel preſcribes, lead to the enjoyment of the moſt enlarged felicity, which creatures can poſſeſs in this world, inſuring to us withal the perfection of bleſſedneſs in a better.

Where ſuch *internal* evidence marks the finger of God, and ſuch *external* evidence ſeals the record, with the divine ſignature of truth, it highly behoves every man to conſider, why he refuſeth to hear Him, that ſpeaketh from Heaven; leaſt the threatenings contained in that word come upon him, when "the deſpiſers ſhall "wonder and periſh."*

It were much to be wiſhed that they would ſeriouſly reflect, whom it moſt deeply concerns, whether the true reaſon, why they hate the light, neither come unto the light, is not the very one, which God in his word

* Acts xiii. 41.

hath alledged, " becauſe their deeds " are evil."†

Nor let them fancy that they move in a ſphere of ſuperior intelligence and becauſe they have daringly ſhaken off what they deem the fetters of prieſtcraft and ſuperſtition, that they can now look down with contempt on the groveling votaries of faith and revelation, who may not move a ſtep beyond the boundary of their ſacred circle. On enquiry it will be found, if our repreſentation is juſt, that in the very rejection of the ſcriptures of truth, every unbeliever is neceſſarily driven to embrace abſurdities more glaring

† John iii. 19.

glaring, than any he ſuppoſes, and preſumes to cavil at therein, and to be the dupe of a credulity greater, and more dangerous, than that which he affects to deride.

The believer, under the influence of the principles, which he embraces, muſt neceſſarily in every ſtation and relation of life be a better member of ſociety, and a better man, than the infidel—-whilſt he ſtands therefore fixed on the firm baſis of fulleſt conviction of the truth, and enjoys the bleſſedneſs thence reſulting, he can receive unhurt the ſhafts of his adverſaries, and retort them, not with aſperity but in love, and in the ſpirit of

meekneſs, compelling his mockers to own this mortifying truth; *I am ſafe if it is falſe. You are damned if it is true.*

ESSAY II.

INFIDELITY RESTS ON EVIDENCE MUCH MORE QUESTIONABLE THAN ANY WHICH IT REJECTS IN THE GOSPEL, AND REQUIRES A CREDULITY, MUCH MORE IRRATIONAL THAN CAN BE CHARGED ON THE FAITH WHICH IT PRESUMES TO RIDICULE.

FAITH, is the perſuaſion wrought in the mind, reſpecting things and truths, received on the teſtimony of others.

The aſſent and conviction is ſaid to be rational, when flowing from evidence ſuited to produce ſuch conviction in the underſtanding.

Credulity appears, in receiving aſſertions, though unattended with ſuch evidence; Infidelity, in rejecting them, though ſupported by the higheſt, and moſt reſpectable authority.

It has been the general weapon of the modern deſpiſers of revealed religion, to combat the evidence, by which it is ſupported, with ridicule, and to endeavour to treat as contemptible, the underſtanding of thoſe, who can receive as true, what they

are pleaſed to term glaring abſurdities. If indeed contempt were argument, and ridicule the teſt of truth, it muſt be confeſſed, that the adverſaries of the goſpel have an unrival'd ſuperiority. "Such are not "the weapons of our warfare."*

We are permitted only to propoſe the truth with its evidence, to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God, and if that evidence is defective, and inadmiſſible, they are wiſe, who reject it. But before they do ſo, it behoves them well to conſider the facts, and their import, leaſt by diſbelieving them without proper inveſtigation, they betray their wiſhes, and

* 2 Cor. x. 4.

the intereſt they have in perſuading themſelves, that they may not be true. Or if having really conſidered them, they ſtill refuſe their aſſent, it becomes them at leaſt to examine, whether in ſo doing they are not obliged to give credit to ſuppoſitions, more abſurd, and irrational, than any of thoſe which they affect to deſpiſe.

Admitting the being of God, omnipotence and omniſcience conſtitute his moſt diſtinguiſhed perfections. But if his wiſdom be infinite, he muſt know future events himſelf, and may communicate that knowledge to others, which, from his fore-knowledge enſures the certainty of the event enſuing. Nor is it at all abſurd

ſurd or incredible to ſuppoſe, that, as almighty, for purpoſes of his own glory, he ſhould beſtow on ſome individuals choſen for this end, powers tranſcending, and controuling the ordinary operations of nature in the confirmation of truths, which may require this ſeal of their divine Original.

Prophecies and miracles are not therefore in themſelves *impoſſible*, and when the ſituation of men and things are ſuch as to need ſome very peculiar manner of engaging the attention of mankind, to matters highly concerning the glory of God and the good of his creatures, it is neither irrational nor *improbable* to ſuppoſe, that he may have uſed theſe extraor-

dinary means to awaken their attention and excite their enquiries, into the purport of thoſe truths, which ſuch prophecies, and miracles are adduced to ſupport.

If a man bearing profeſſedly a meſſage from God, highly correſponding with all his moral perfections, and in its tendency obviouſly calculated to promote the purity, and ſecure the bleſſedneſs of mankind, produces theſe credentials in ſupport of the doctrine which he teaches, and the practice, which he recommends; it becomes us, as reaſonable creatures, to examine into the truth, and reality of the credentials produced—the character—motives—and objects of the meſſenger.

meſſenger. If after the fulleſt inveſtigation, the facts alledged, appear to be ſupported by ſuch evidence, as amounts to moral certainty—and would in every other caſe be admitted as ſuch—if the meſſenger himſelf is judged moſt worthy of credit, from every part of his conduct, which ought to produce confidence in his veracity--if he is withal placed in ſuch circumſtances, that it cannot be ſuppoſed, he is either deceived himſelf, or can have any inducement to impoſe upon others, but the very reverſe in the higheſt degree—to reject his teſtimony, we muſt be reduced to believe things, more irrational and abſurd, than they can poſſibly be charged with, who on the moſt exact

and

and attentive enquiry, ſubmit to the evidence with which the aſſerted truth is attended.

Having in a former eſſay on divine revelation, produced ſome evidences of its credibility ariſing from miracles, and prophecies, I wiſh to refer to what is there ſaid on this ſubject, obſerving only farther, that if any man of reaſon and candour examines the prophecies, and their fulfilment —the things themſelves—the perſons —the names—the times—the circumſtances included in them—unleſs he can prove, that no ſuch perſons ever propheſied—or that no ſuch events ever happened in correſpondence with their declarations: He ought at leaſt

leaſt to conſider whether it is not next to impoſſible, that any man affecting the character of a prophet, would have dared to hazard ſuch conjectures, (if they muſt be ſo denominated,) and that theſe conjectures, ſhould be all of them, in the minuteſt circumſtances, exactly accompliſhed—and this too in oppoſition to every probability in the appearance of things, when the prophecy was delivered; and often contrary to the very poſſibility of ſuch events happening in the ordinary courſe of human proceedings.

That ſuch men as the prophets did exiſt, we muſt reject all hiſtorical teſtimony to deny. But were they artful and deſigning men, who had ambitious

bitious ends to anſwer, and worldly intereſts to promote? Their blaſphemers dare not impute ſuch intentions to them—It is evident that every thing near and dear to them was hazarded by their fidelity: Reputation, eaſe, intereſt, and even life itſelf were at ſtake. For their meſſage "they were ſtoned, they were ſawn "aſunder, they were ſlain with the "ſword, they wandered about in "ſheep-ſkins, and goat-ſkins, being "deſtitute; afflicted; tormented."* They propheſied to ſavage monarchs, and a rebellious people; and nothing but the neceſſity they were under to ſpeak—the conſciouſneſs of their divine miſſion—and their certainty of the

* Heb. xi. 37.

the events, which they foretold, could ever have engaged them in that miniſtry. A man muſt be indeed obſtinately credulous, if he can ſuppoſe that ſuch men knew they were deceivers--expoſed themſelves to detection by hazarding a lie of their own invention, without any one end or purpoſe of utility, which they could thereby ſecure to themſelves—but on the contrary ſubjected themſelves to every imaginable diſadvantage, forfeiting ev'ry proſpect in this world, without the poſſibility of hope, in that which is to come.

The miracles performed by Jeſus and his apoſtles, as was before ſhewn, have every demonſtration of reality, which

which the nature of the thing will admit. Unlike the lying wonders of deceivers, or the tricks of jugglers, they were ſo multiplied, ſo amazing, performed on ſuch multitudes, who could not be miſtaken reſpecting the effects, which they ſeverally felt in their bodies; not one of whom could ever be produced to prove a colluſion, though every temptation muſt have been held out to procure ſuch diſcovery; and when every avowal of the benefits received, expoſed the perſon to the bittereſt reviling, excommunication, and even death itſelf—Is this probable, nay, is it morally poſſible, if one, if all theſe miracles were deluſive, pretended, falſe? Muſt not then ſuch an imagination go

to

to the utmoſt bound of determined credulity?

Nor were the men who performed theſe miracles leſs monuments of divine power, than the miracles themſelves—unlearned, unſuited by education, habits, connections, to gain any attention from their countrymen, yet boldly ſtanding forth, and in oppoſition to power, wiſdom, influence, and eſtabliſhed cuſtoms; overturning, which is the hardeſt of all conqueſts, all preceding religious eſtabliſhments heathen, or jewiſh, merely by the evidence attending the truths, which they declared; animated only by one divinely inſpired motive, without the leaſt proſpect to themſelves

themſelves of honor, intereſt or advantage; yea, profeſſing to know and expect, that in every place bonds and impriſonments awaited them; and ſealing at laſt with unſhaken confidence, by their blood, the reality of the miracles, to which they appealed, and the truths to which they bare teſtimony—They muſt have been indeed of all men the moſt fooliſh, the moſt wicked, and the moſt miſerable, if they had not in themſelves the moſt aſſured evidence of their own divine miſſion—To have ſuppoſed but *one* ſuch man, thus acting, thus ſuffering, knowing ſuch pretenſions were falſe, and his miracles deluſions, is a great ſtretch of probability; but to ſuppoſe that hundreds—thouſands

ſands—living—dying—-dying under every torment that malice and diabolical fury could inflict, ſhould uniformly perſiſt in the ſame avowals, though the whole was a deſigned premeditated lie; that the facts were all falſe, and that they knew them to be ſo—-Ah! let the man, who dares avow his belief of this, be at leaſt aſhamed to charge others with credulity.

Furthermore let any man read the Scriptures, and obſerve the divine ſimplicity, which characteriſes them; let him compare the open face of chriſtian truth, with the dark hints, the ſarcaſtic inſinuations, and the diſingenuous miſrepreſentations of thoſe, who

who have ſought to weaken the force of its evidence; and if after conſidering where credit is due either to men or facts, they can prefer the aſſertions and credibility of a Rouſſeau, a Hume, a Voltaire, or a Gibbon, to Jeſus and his diſciples, we appeal to the deciſions of candour, where credulity is moſt chargable?

There are many who affect to inſinuate that only weak men, low mechanics, and women can believe the ſtrange things recorded in the Bible; they would perſuade us, that the wiſe and enlightened of every nation dare think for themſelves, and reject what their reaſon cannot comprehend—It may be readily granted that

that the number of thoſe, who do not believe is great, but let it be obſerved alſo, that they, who reject the goſpel evidence, are as averſe to the goſpel principles and practice. Many of the wiſeſt and beſt of men however will be found, to have lived in the faith of revealed truth, and to have died in the holy comfort, which this faith hath adminiſtered. Was this ever really the caſe with any infidel? He may die ſtupid or hardened, but he cannot die happy.

Whoever reads Lord Littleton's account of the converſion of St. Paul, or Mr. Weſt on the Reſurrection, will find that chriſtianity though not derived from argumentative reaſon,

ſon, as its ſource, is accompanied by the moſt luminous evidence, and will bear the moſt exact inveſtigation—Theſe at leaſt were men as enlightened and improved, as the moſt determined, and ſupercilious enemies of revelation.

We could appeal to names modern or ancient, if they were of any weight in the controverſy——Men, whoſe depth of judgment, improved knowledge, and high attainments in all that can deſerve the title of wiſdom, were adorned by the moſt genuine piety and purity of manners, a Bacon, a Hale, a Leighton, a Boyle, (not to mention thoſe of a later date, which might appear adulation) with

all the army of confeſſors, who have enlightened and amended the age in which they lived—But perhaps it may be ſomewhat ſtill more efficacious to ſuppreſs their overweaning affectation of ſuperior wiſdom to mention to the moderns, that Newton, Locke, Maclaurin, are aſſociates with thoſe, who plead for the truth of the Prophecies, and for the miracles recorded in the Bible.

Not that we ſeek honor from men or ſupport from human authority, the truths of God muſt ſtand on their own foundation, and produce conviction by their own intrinſic power—Were they embraced as the concluſions of mere reaſoning and received only as

Cicero's Tuſculan queſtions, as moſt probable, we ſhould only believe, as though we believed not. To be known with efficacy, they muſt be "ſpiritually diſcerned."* Our faith muſt not ſtand "in the wiſdom of men "but in the power of God."† Let not however the diſputers of this world imagine, that wiſdom ſhall die with them, nor impudently affirm that chriſtianity will not bear the ſcrutiny of the moſt penetrating enquiry— When they have deigned to examine thoroughly the argument, they will not perhaps ſo freely deride our credulity, and have at leaſt the modeſty to wait 'till they can ſhow, that they ſtand on firmer ground of evidence than we do.

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † 1 Cor. ii. 5.

We appeal to the ſacred records for the reaſon of the hope that is in us, yet we reſt not here; profeſſing, as we do, that the arguments for divine revelation far outweigh all the cavils of its adverſaries, we acknowledge, and glory in the acknowledgement, *that the faith of God's elect cometh not merely from moral ſuaſion, but muſt be of divine operation.*

ESSAY III.

ON JEHOVAH JESUS.

"THOU ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve."*—Divine honor is, and can only be, due to the one true God, His glory he will not give to another. To aſcribe it therefore to any but himſelf is the tranſgreſſion of the firſt and great commandment.

* Luke iv. 8.

To the revelation which God hath given us muſt we be indebted for the knowledge of himſelf—The world by wiſdom knew not God; nor ever could know him, unleſs "he that "firſt cauſed the light to ſhine out of "darkneſs had ſhined in our hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge "of *his* glory."* Without this we ſhall know nothing of God as we ought to know.

The univerſal prevalence of idolatry in the heathen world, is among the ſtriking proofs of the corruption, ignorance, and ſtupidity of the human heart. Whilſt they worſhipped "lords many and gods many,"† they

continued

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. † 1 Cor. viii. 5.

ontinued in reality " without God in the world;"* totally unacquainted ith his nature and perfections; neier worſhipped, ſerved or obeyed im, as they ought to do.

"To us there is but one God,"§ This is the leading article of the hriſtian faith. If therefore in the evelation, which he hath been pleaſed to make of himſelf, we behold one n the human form and nature, bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh, haring in all the incommunicable glories of eſſential Deity, it can only be, becauſe He and the Father *are one.*"†

The mode of ſubſiſtence of the

 perſons

* Eph. ii. 12. § 1 Cor. viii. 6. † John x. 30.

perſons in Jehovah Elohim, I preſume not the attempt to explain—it would be as abſurd as preſumptuous. "For who can by ſearching find out "God, who can find out the Al-"mighty to perfection?"* All that can be known of him in our preſent ſtate, muſt be derived from the manifeſtation, which he has made of himſelf in his revealed word. To be taught of God therein is the higheſt attainment of human wiſdom. Whenever we attempt to "be wiſe "above that which is written" we only expoſe our folly and our ignorance, "darkening," as Job expreſſes it, "counſel, by words without know-"ledge."†

It

* Job xi. 7. † Job xxxviii. 2.

It is impoſſible to read the bible, and, admitting the book to contain a divine revelation, implicitly to receive its contents, without perceiving a perſonage of tranſcendent excellence deſcribed therein, to whom all the law and the prophets bear witneſs*—Of whom ſuch things are ſpoken, as comport only with "the "King, eternal, immortal, inviſi- "ble,"†—and yet attended with ſuch circumſtances as are peculiar to the children of men.

Jeſus, the ſon of Mary, ſtands confeſt by all who hold the chriſtian faith, to be the promiſed Saviour; "He "that ſhould come, neither look we for

* Luke xxiv. 27. † 1 Tim. i. 17.

another :" but among thoſe, who profeſs to receive him in the character of the true Meſſiah, great diſputes have ariſen about the glory due to him and the worſhip, which ſhould be paid him.

Whether Jeſus Chriſt be *very God*, is a matter avowedly of the laſt conſequence to be determined—It is not an opinion of ſuch a nature, that we may doubt of it without crime, or diſpute without danger, but which reaches to the moſt momentuous point, of what ſhall " be called God, " and be worſhipped;"* and the reſult of the argument, muſt conclude one of the parties, BLASPHEMERS, or IDOLATERS.

Whoever

* 2 Teſſa. ii. 4.

Whoever will be at the pains to peruſe Mr. Jones's Doctrine of the Trinity, and to compare ſcripture with ſcripture, will ſee the Man Chriſt Jeſus in a variety of places, bearing the names—poſſeſſing the attributes—performing the works—and entitled to the worſhip, peculiar to the moſt high God, yea, receiving as his due, the adoration, worſhip and praiſe of angels, as well as men.

It deſerves eſpecial remark that the two moſt auguſt appearances of Jehovah to his church, under the old teſtament diſpenſation, are in the new expreſsly declared to refer to Jeſus Chriſt.

Was the glory of God attended with circumſtances ſingularly awful, when the law was given on Mount Sinai? We are aſſured, Acts vii. 38. "This is he that was in the church "in the Wilderneſs, &c. to whom "our fathers would not obey but "thruſt him from them."

Iſaiah's viſion, Chap. vi. conveys to us ideas, the moſt ſublime and reverential. "I ſaw the Lord ſitting "upon his throne, and his train "filled the temple; above it ſtood "the ſeraphim, each one had ſix "wings, with twain he covered his "face, and with twain he covered his "feet, and with twain he did fly; "and one cried unto another and "ſaid,

" ſaid, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord
" of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full
" of his glory—And the poſts of the
" door moved at the voice of him
" that cried, and the houſe was filled
" with ſmoke." Now we know, John
xii. 41. that, " theſe things ſaid Iſai-
" ah, when he ſaw *his* glory and ſpake
" of *him*," of this very Jehovah Je-
ſus, who was in the fullneſs of time
manifeſted " in the fleſh." Admit-
ting the authority of the application
it cannot but be demonſtrably evident,
that He who condeſcended to take
the form of a ſervant, and die the
death of a ſlave, was " God over all,
" bleſſed forever :"* and " from
" everlaſting to everlaſting the
" ſame :"

* Rom. ix. 5.

" ſame :"† whether filling the temple with his glory, or rending the air with his dying cry; whether ſeated on the great white throne ſurrounded by his emerald bow, with all the hoſts of Heaven, and the redeemed proſtrate before him, and caſting their crowns at his feet; or expoſed on the croſs, naked, deformed with buffetting and ſcourges, and expiring in torment, between the vileſt of malefactors.

But I wave entering further into particular texts on the ſubject, which have been ſo often and ſo forcibly produced by others, who have worthily employed their labours in demonſtrating

† Pſalm xc. 2.

ohſtrating this important truth; ob-
erving only, that the arguments urged
om ſome ſcriptures, which ſeem to
mply inferiority in the Son of God
re fairly reconcileable, when ap-
lied to the Man Jeſus Chriſt, whilſt
hoſe, which declare his eternal pow-
r and godhead, and ſpeak of him in
haracters deſcriptive of, and appro-
riate to true Deity, admit of no
conſiſtent application, but as "in him
"dwelt all the fullneſs of the God-
"head bodily."* The very idea of
a greater Jehovah and a leſs, of a ſu-
perior and ſubordinate God ſeems
ſhocking and abſurd in the extreme,
nd is as irrational and unphiloſo-
phical as unſcriptural.

There

* Col. ii. 9.

There are yet two general arguments in addition to the particular ones, which deſerve conſideration, and to thoſe, who admit the bible to be a divine revelation, ſhould appear deciſive on the ſubject.

It is evident from multiplied paſſages which might be produced from the book of God, that one grand intention of revelation is to lay the ax to the root of idolatry, and to lead men to the knowledge and worſhip of the one true Jehovah; "as God and "there is none elſe."* The moſt condign vengeance is threatened againſt thoſe, who dare to compare themſelves with him, or affect likeneſs to him.

* Iſai. xlv. 5.

im.* But the whole tenor of the
riptures leads us ſo directly to aſ-
ribe this incommunicable honor to
od our Saviour—they deſcribe him
ith ſuch perfections, and glory ap-
ropriate to eſſential Godhead—give
s ſuch injunctions to worſhip him—
nd record ſo many inſtances of pray-
r offered up to him, and of divine
onors paid him by thoſe, who beſt
new his character and pretenſions,
—that it ſeems ſtrange to doubt,
hether it is or is not the avowed
urpoſe of the bible to inculcate
hat "all men ſhould honor the Son,
even as they honor the Father."†
or were it otherwiſe, muſt not the
ery book, whoſe object and inten-
tion

* Iſai. xlvi. † John v. 23.

tion is to guard us againſt idolatry, naturally and neceſſarily lead us into that very crime? Would the only wiſe God our Saviour have left the poſſibility of doubt in a matter ſo momentuous? Had he counted it "robbery to be equal with God,"† ſhould we not have heard of ſome caution, ſome word of warning on the ſubject? Would he not have rejected every act and appearance of receiving ſuch honor and worſhip from his diſciples with as much abhorrence, as the propoſal of Satan himſelf in his temptation? But when the reverſe of all this appears, muſt we not conclude, that He who "being "found in faſhion as a man, humbled "himſelf

† Philip ii. 6.

" himſelf to death, even the death of " the croſs," was ever in the union of the undivided Eſſence, " God over " all bleſſed forever;" and that as to worſhip is no idolatry; ſo to deny him this peculiar honor is to blaſpheme.

The prejudices of education and the pre-conceived opinions of men, are ſtrangely apt to lead them involuntarily to warp the ſcriptures, and make them correſpond with the ſentiments, which they have eſpouſed. Thoſe who have never ſeen or heard of the revealed Word, and are utterly ignorant of our diſputes reſpecting the doctrine in queſtion, may be thought much more impartially to be called in to give their ſuffrage, than ourſelves,

ourſelves, with regard to a point, in which they can be ſuppoſed to have no intereſt or concern. Let a Chineſe Philoſopher, an Indian Brahmin, or a Mahometan Mufti, have the bible put into his hands, and after a careful peruſal be aſk'd concerning the Chriſtian's God; and whether Jeſus Chriſt according to the tenor of that book ſhould be worſhipped as ſuch, can there be a doubt what would be *his* deciſion? He might indeed, as moſt probably he would, reject the book and its Author with abhorrence; but admitting the contents to be true, the claim of the incarnate Lord would not appear in the leaſt equivocal, and the principal reaſon aſſigned for his rejection of the

chriſtian

chriſtian revelation and of him, who conſtitutes its glory, would be the very ſame given ſo long ago by the Jews, "That he being man, made "himſelf God."*

If the book of revelation then, in its whole tendency, appears to lead us to the acknowledgement of the divine Glory, and to the worſhip of God incarnate; and if they who cannot be ſuppoſed to be influenced, by our educational prejudices, Jews, Turks, and Heathens, would on the peruſal of it unanimouſly thus decide, it ſurely will form the ſtrongeſt preſumption in favor of the poſition which we maintain, that admitting the

* John x. 33.

ourſelves, with regard to a point, i
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deed, as moſt probably he would, re
ject the book and its Author wit
abhorrence; but admitting the con
tents to be true, the claim of the in
carnate Lord would not appear in th
leaſt equivocal, and the principa
reaſon aſſigned for his rejection of th
chriſtian

chriſtian revelation and of him, who conſtitutes its glory, would be the very ſame given ſo long ago by the Jews, "That he being man, made "himſelf God."*

If the book of revelation then, in its whole tendency, appears to lead us to the acknowledgement of the divine Glory, and to the worſhip of God incarnate; and if they who cannot be ſuppoſed to be influenced, by our educational prejudices, Jews, Turks, and Heathens, would on the peruſal of it unanimouſly thus decide, it ſurely will form the ſtrongeſt preſumption in favor of the poſition which we maintain, that admitting the

* John x. 33.

the ſcripture as a divine revelatio
Jeſus Chriſt is to be worſhipped a
adored by all believers, as the tr
Jehovah—And therefore when H
ſhall come to be our judge, the
who have robbed him of his eſſenti
glory, and denied his eternal pow
and Godhead, muſt be concluded
guilt and puniſhment, with infid
and blaſphemers.

ESSAY IV.

ON THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, ABOVE ALL OTHER SYSTEMS OF RELIGION, WHICH HAVE BEEN PROMULGED IN THE WORLD.

THE diſtinguiſhed characteriſtic of man is neither his reaſon, nor his riſibility: a nobler trait exalts his nature, above all creatures of this ſublunary world; *that he alone is formed with a capacity for the knowledge, ſervice, and*

and enjoyment of God. Religion is h
peculiar diſtinction, and his high
dignity.

No nation, I apprehend, hath y
been diſcovered upon earth, in whi
ſome traces of religious opinions a
ſome rites of divine worſhip have n
been found, however abſurd the on
or horrible the other. The univ
ſality of the thing muſt have a ca
in the very ſtate and nature of ma

The deſign of all religions is un
form and their object the ſame,
placate an offended, and to pleaſe
holy God.

Fr

From the human ſacrifice, to the barley cake offered at the altar of their gods, the deſire of the worſhipper was evident; to render the Deity propitious. But every ſuch oblation implies a conſciouſneſs of offence, at leaſt beſpeaks ſuperſtitious fear, (for fear is the offſpring of guilt) and manifeſts an endeavour to regain the favour of the offended Deity.

That evil is in the world appears by the general confeſſion, as well as by the religious practices of mankind, to avert its effects. The moſt admired of the heathen writers acknowledged and lamented it, and amongſt the inſtitutions of their le-

giſlators, religious propitiatory ri
and ſacrifices occupy a conſidera
place.

The very general admiſſion
ſacrifices into the ritual of all
tions, ſeems to prove their riſe fro
common origin; and a more plauſi
one, has not yet appeared, th
what has been ſuggeſted, that th
are the traditionary remains of
inſtructions, whom God preſer
in the ark, and by whoſe poſteri
the whole earth was overſpre
The vicarious ſacrifice of the a
mal in the place of the offerer h
been continued, whilſt the gra
object, to which it pointed, h
been forgotten.

Th

That the blood of a beaſt was ſo inadequate in itſelf to relieve the conſcience of the criminal offerer ſeems to be a truth deducible from reaſon, as well as affirmed by the ſcripture, nor could thouſands of rams or ten thouſands of rivers of oil be more valuable. A ſacrifice of nobler name than theſe was neceſſary, a ſacrifice, to which all the divine inſtitutions pointed, and from which all other ſacrifices, however perverted in their kind or intention, were derived.

It is impoſſible not to obſerve, admitting the veracity of divine revelation, what a ſatisfactory foundation for hope and confidence in God is laid, by that great and

awful ſacrifice, which is the pro
minent object in the ſacred record
The incarnation, ſufferings, and dea
of Jeſus Chriſt, both God and Ma
in one Chriſt, "delivered for ou
"offences, and raiſed again for ou
"juſtification,"* offer to the con
ſcience the moſt conſolatory groun
for concluding, that "peace is com-
"pletely made by the blood of th
"croſs;"† that "he is able to ſav
"to the uttermoſt,"‖ and that th
chief of ſinners have no cauſe t
deſpair, becauſe of the number an
magnitude of their offences whe
he ſaith "deliver him from goin
"down to the pit, I have found a
"ranſom,"‡

Compar

* Rom. iv. 25. † Col. i. 20 ‖ Heb. vii. 2
‡ Job xxxiii. 23.

Compare this voluntary vicarious ſacrifice of the Son of God, with all the inſtitutions and inventions of men, and how "poor and beggarly" do all other methods appear of rendering the Deity propitious! and how inadequate to the end, which they have in view, to placate an offended God! When he is ſeen "in Chriſt reconciling "the world unto himſelf, not im-"puting their treſpaſſes unto them"* —when the juſt for the unjuſt makes peace by the blood of his croſs, "bearing their ſin and their puniſh-"ment in his own body on the "tree"‡—then the conſcience reſts on the moſt ſolid baſis of confi-

 dence.

* 2 Cor. v. 19. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

dence. "There is, there can be
"no condemnation to thoſe who are
"in Chriſt Jeſus."*

I enter not into all the abſurd
and cruel penances, ſelf-inflicted o
impoſed, at the folly of which w
ſmile, or ſhudder at their atrocity
But to name them is a ſufficien
Evidence of their total inefficacy t
ſerve the purpoſes, for which they
are endured; a holy and offended
God can receive no ſatisfaction from
theſe, they muſt tend to provoke
his diſpleaſure, inſtead of placating
his indignation.

Bu

* Rom. viii. 1.

But if the tranſcendent excellence of the goſpel appears in the revelation therein made of a propitiation every way adequate to our wants and wretchedneſs; and fully capable "of making the conſcience "perfect" from every charge of ſin and guilt; will not its ſupereminence alſo ſtand confeſſed in the practice, which it enjoins, and the precepts which it enforces. They are indeed ſuch as need only be propoſed and conſidered, to be admired; and muſt extort acknowledgements, even from thoſe, who refuſe to ſubmit to the divine injunctions, that they are worthy of God to ordain, and moſt fitting for man to obey—that they tend to raiſe

his nature to the higheſt exaltation of which it is capable—that earth under the prevailing and univerſal Influence of the goſpel would be the counterpart of heaven—and that the happineſs of every individual and of all around him, in whatever relation he ſtands to them, is promoted exactly in proportion to his conformity to the principles and the practice, which the religion of Jeſus enjoins.

It would lead me into a field too vaſt to enter into the religious principles and practices of all the nations, with which we are acquainted. How many things among them have been diſcovered impure, pro-

fane

ſane, cruel, horrible! How many abſurd and ridiculous! That a holy God cannot find pleaſure in theſe, it would be needleſs to argue, but take the pureſt ſyſtem, of the preſent philoſophy, of Confucius, Cicero, or the Stoical School, and add all the improvements, which, modern unbelievers rejecting the ſcriptures, have deigned to borrow from them, and having grafted on the ſtock of what they call *natural religion*, have pretended to produce, as its native growth; then let the purity, ſimplicity, dignity, and preciſion of our adorable Saviour's ſermon on the mount be conſidered, and amidſt the multitude of other ſtriking paſſages in the ſcriptures ſtamped with

the image of Deity, let the 13th chapter of St. Paul's firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians be weighed againſt all that hath elſewhere been eſteemed nobleſt in the ſcience of ethics and morals, and I am content that the preponderation of the ſcale ſhall determine, where the clear-eſt, ſimpleſt, and moſt ſelf-evident truths are laid down, by which we can be beſt enabled to walk and pleaſe the holy God.

The regulations of the chriſtian ſcheme reach to the *conſcience* as well as *conduct*; controul the will and deſires, as much as the actions of men; admit of nothing ſecretly harboured in the heart contrary to the pureſt

pureſt dictates of love without diſ-
ſimulation, not only every act of
immorality, impurity, violence, in-
juſtice is forbidden—not only eve-
ry purpoſe of malice or revenge—
not only every imagination of cor-
rupt deſire, and every motion of
pride, is branded as criminal, and
forbidden, but the very oppoſite
ſpirit and practice in the moſt en-
larged meaſure is enjoined. "To
"prefer others in honour to our-
"ſelves"*—"to be lowly in heart"‡
—"to love our enemies"—"to for-
"give all injuries"—"to bleſs thoſe
"who curſe us—and pray for thoſe
"who deſpitefully uſe us and per-
"ſecute us."† Indeed it is ſcarce-

* Rom. x. 10. ‡ Mat. xi. 29. † Mat. v. 44.

ly poſſible to turn to a page of the ſacred ſcriptures, in which ſome of the characteriſtic peculiarities of its divine purity do not glow, and like the beams of the meridian ſun dart on the narrow road, which leads us up to glory and to God.

Every thing in the book of revelation hath the moſt direct and powerful tendency to produce the bleſſed effects, which it enjoins.

The *principle* on which all proceeds is the pureſt, and moſt mightily efficacious. "The love of God "which paſſeth knowledge ſhed a- "broad in our hearts by the Holy "Ghoſt

"Ghoſt given unto us.* Obligations are ſeen and felt of ſuch a nature, as muſt forcibly engage us to conclude, that being "bought "with a price," and ſuch a price too! we are bound by every tie of gratitude and duty "to glorify God in our "bodies, and in our ſpirits which are his."† The mercies we have received; and are every moment receiving, call upon us to "preſent our bodies, "ſouls, and ſpirits, living ſacrifices, "holy and acceptable to God, which "is our reaſonable ſervice."‡ And every view of God our Saviour from the cradle to the croſs, and thence to the throne, neceſſarily brings with it, to thoſe who believe the

* Rom. v. 5. † 1 Cor. vi. 20. ‡ Rom. xii. 1.

the love which he hath unto us, ſuch powerfully conſtraining influence, that we cannot but judge, and determine, as the reſult of fulleſt conviction "that we that live ſhould not "henceforth live unto ourſelves, "but unto him that died for us and "roſe again."*

The *power* ſupplied in the goſpel diſpenſation to carry its principle into effect, is avowedly that, which is ſo much needed, ſo very deſirable, and ſo adequate to the end. Of the weakneſs of the human underſtanding, the wiſeſt of men are the moſt ſenſible; and the bias of the human heart, notwithſtanding all the fair

* 2 Cor. v. 15.

fair pictures, which pride and ignorance have affected to draw, is too evidently proved by univerſal experience, to incline to corruption and evil. If nothing great could be atchieved, as the wiſeſt heathens reſolved, without the Deity, ſurely the greateſt of all taſks, the overruling the corrupt affections of ſinful men, eminently requires divine interpoſition.

In the Chriſtian ſyſtem this divine aſſiſtance is promiſed, and all the means and inſtitutions preſcribed, lead us to ſeek it, with the aſſured expectation of receiving "exceeding abundantly, beyond all, that we can aſk or think."*

* Eph. iii. 20.

I will not enter at preſent into the reaſonableneſs of prayer; nor argue, that there is nothing abſurd or inconſiſtent in the idea, that God may, and doth communicate to our ſpirits, inſtruction and influence; but I appeal to thoſe who believe nothing of divine grace, and ridicule the very idea of prayer, as the medium of holy communication, becauſe alas! they are themſelves ſtrangers to all its bleſſed effects, I appeal even to thoſe, whether the very expectation of divine ſupport hath not a ſtrong tendency to encourage us, both to ſuffer and to ſerve; and whether, ſuch as are enabled to believe, "my grace is

"ſufficient

ſufficient for thee,"* and to aſk for it in diligent prayer, have not one powerful motive for patience in affliction, and for active duty in the moſt ſelf-denying ſituations, of which thoſe who deſpiſe our faith and hope muſt be utterly deſtitute.

But in all religious inſtitutions, which have prevailed in the world, prayer and application to the Deity, under the idea of receiving ſupport and aſſiſtance, have been enjoined. Compare then their view of the Deity—their prayers—the ſubject of them—and the grounds of

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

of hope which have been propoſed in all falſe religions, and ſay if the chriſtian's God, and his ſervice is not as ſuperior to every other, as Jehovah to Baal in the conteſt by fire, for pre-eminence.

I have only to add, that the proſpect of the *recompence of reward* in view, is as ſingularly in the chriſtian's favor as the principle on which he acts is powerful, and the means propoſed for his aſſiſtance are effectual.

With regard to the glory, which ſhall be revealed, there is in the bible ſomething ſo tranſcendently great, and deſireable; ſo worthy of

of the creator to beſtow, and ſo completely adequate to all the wants, and wiſhes of the creature, yea ſurpaſſing them: that unleſs I am ſwayed more than I can ſuſpect by prejudices imbibed, (and that we are too often ſwayed by them, I will readily admit) the proſpect affords us, is the moſt inviting in itſelf, and the moſt powerfully ſtimulating to every thing noble and excellent, terminating, as we are aſſured, in the higheſt dignity, perfection, and bleſſedneſs, of which our nature is capable. The Elyſian fields, the Mahometan paradiſe, and all the low imaginations, that mark the origin, from which all other ſyſtems of falſe religion flowed, what

are

are theſe compared for a momen
with the tranſporting view of th
"far more exceeding and eterna
"weight of glory"* diſplayed in th
ſcriptures of truth?

Yet even the Elyſian fields or
Mahometan paradiſe with their Ta
tarus and Torments have *ſomethi*
in them, to work upon the deſir
and fears of mankind, and a
far preferable to the darkneſs, an
gloomy doubts of infidelity, ſinc
hope of future rewards and drea
of puniſhment however falſe or fa
tile, they may really be, yet ſo fa
as they are believed, they canno
but tend to influence the conſcienc
an

* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

and conduct. They impoſe *ſome* reſtraint from evil, and afford *ſome* motives for duty, of which an unbeliever on *his* principles muſt be deſtitute.

If then the rewards of the chriſtian revelation, and I may truly add, the threatened puniſhments alſo, are in the higheſt degree adapted to enforce obedience, if the proſpects they afford, are the moſt animating to virtue—if every view of eternal glory in the book of God, is moſt worthy of Jehovah who beſtows the gift, and adapted to confer the higheſt exaltation, and the moſt ſupreme felicity, of which the whole nature of man is capable

—muſt

—muſt we not conclude, that
have the moſt energetic motives
the practice of every thing pr
worthy, and of good report; a
ſo far an internal evidence of
tranſcendent excellence of the tru
which we have embraced.

They, who are influenced ther
fore by chriſtian principles—w
live in dependence upon divi
grace—in the uſe of God's appoi
ed means—and are in holy con
dence looking for the promiſed r
compenſe of reward—muſt in
nature of things, be *better* men, mo
ſtrictly, purely, conſcientiouſly mor
in temper and conduct, than ſu
as are in darkneſs, ſcepticiſm, and i

fideli

lity, and therefore deſtitute of advantages: and for the truth this, we may appeal to the hiſ- of mankind. Not that we refer the herd of Chriſtians, who poſ- nothing of Chriſtianity, but the me; and as more corrupt under ater advantages will be condemned Tyre and Sidon in the day of gment; we refer to the faithful , who live under the conviction the truth, which they profeſs to brace; obeying, at leaſt habitu- deſiring to obey, its injunctions, in the proſpect of the expected , walking in the appointed way. ch ever have been, ſuch are, and r will be, "the ſaints, who are "in

"in Chriſt Jeſus,"* following him
"who hath called them to glory and
"virtue,"† they "run not as uncer-
"tainly;"‡ but reſt in ſure and
ſteadfaſt hope, that as they have
walked with him upon the earth they
ſhall ſhortly reign with him in hea-
ven.

* Philip. i. 1. † 2 Pet. i. 3. ‡ 1 Cor. ix. 2

ESSAY V.

ON THE SUPERIOR COMFORT AND BLESSEDNESS WHICH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST MINISTERS TO THOSE WHO TRULY EMBRACE IT, LIVING AND DYING.

TO be happy is the univerſal deſire and purſuit: and as highly reaſonable as it is natural. How to obtain the largeſt meaſure of this felicity is the ſummit of wiſdom, and he muſt be allowed the beſt friend of mankind, who can moſt clearly and ſatisfac-

torily inſtruct us on this momentuo
ſubject.

That miſery of various kinds is t
preſent portion of man is a truth t
viſible not to be ſeen, and too u
verſal not to be felt.—We are inde
"born to ſorrow, and trouble
"the ſparks fly upwards;"* and
the clouds return after rain, thou
perhaps with ſome intervening glea
of ſunſhine, affliction ſucceeds affl
tion, 'till the ſcene cloſes in the gra
"and the worm feeds ſweetly
us."‡

The ills of life, and the pangs
death have afforded fruitful ma

* Job v. 7. ‡ Job xxiv, 20.

of contemplation to every moraliſt in the heathen world, and they have endeavoured to ſuggeſt grounds of conſolation to fortify the mind, under the preſſure of that load with which mortality groans being burdened. But it muſt be owned after all the fine things which they have ſaid, and which have been conveyed to us in the moſt elegant language, that the wiſeſt philoſophers are but miſerable comforters, and leave us juſt where they found us, the prey of preſent anguiſh, and in doubt and dread of what is future.

They ſuggeſt indeed arguments to engage us patiently to ſupport the burden, but the lever reſts not on

ſolid materials, the yielding bed gi
way and the load returns with all
oppreſſive weight.

The goſpel of Chriſt alone, wh
brings life and immortality to lig
provides the adequate relief for h
man wants and miſery—It ſweet
every comfort; ſooths every ſorro
ſuggeſts the moſt powerful conſid
ations; and promiſes the all-ſuffi
ent help of divine grace; not only
ſupport us under the moſt afflict
diſpenſations, but to enable us
count them all joy—not with pro
pretentions to Stoical apathy, eng
ing us to deſpiſe ſuffering, but ami
the tendereſt feelings of the man,
perinducing the ſpirit of the Chri

; which can verify the truth of
t paradox, " though ſorrowful,
" yet always rejoicing."*

The beauty of virtue however
hly blazoned hath little conqueſts
oaſt—the mental optics of mankind
either darkened and incapable of
ling the power of her charms, or ſhe
o be wooed and won in a way ſo con-
y to every thing which our nature
ates, and craves, that ſhe hath never
herto met with one real votary a-
ng the children of men. The boaſt-
rewards of her poſſeſſion are there-
yet unknown, becauſe the man
ot found who has a right to claim

 them

* 2 Cor. vi. 10.

them. That "all have ſinned,"† is a truth written as with a ſun-beam.

The goſpel proceeds upon, and demonſtrates this grand axiom, and in the proviſion made for man in his preſent ſtate, *conſidered as a ſinner*, lays the foundation of all ſubſtantial comfort and felicity.

Two conſiderations are eſſential to preſent enjoyment, *what I poſſeſs*, and *what I hope for*.

What I poſſeſs. Admitting I am a ſinner, whatever outward advantages I may enjoy of health, abundance, honor, and all the goods of this pa-

† Rom. iii. 23.

ing life, " ſtill one thing is needful," the favor of an offended God—The apprehenſions of his diſpleaſure, like the worm at the root of the gourd, will make every leaf droop, and every flower wither, and without ſome ſatisfaction on this head, fear muſt forever mar every enjoyment.

The goſpel of Jeſus in this reſpect ſtands ſupereminently glorious in the relief which it affords to the conſcience, and the perfect ſatisfaction it offers to every one that receiveth its great and precious promiſes—God is there ſeen " in Chriſt reconciling the " world to himſelf not imputing their " treſpaſſes unto them"*—The con-

 fidence

* 2 Cor. v. 19.

fidence and conſciouſneſs of this gives the higheſt reliſh to every preſent enjoyment, "Eat thy bread with "joy and drink thy wine with a merry "heart for God now accepteth thy works."* Could I elſe eat my bread with comfort, or reliſh the ſweeteſt draught, whilſt the naked ſword of judgment, ſuſpended by the brittle hair of life trembled over my devoted head?

But had I no ſenſibility of evils felt, or greater evils feared; if doubt and darkneſs thickened round me, the proſpect would ſtill be dreary, and wring the bitter drop of anxiety into the ſparkling bowl of joy—I muſt

* Eccleſ. ix. 7.

muſt die—the time is ſhort—to-morrow—perhaps the next moment—And whither am I going? Till this be ſatisfactorily reſolved can I taſte enjoyment? or give ſleep to my eyes or ſlumber to my eyelids in peace?

The glorious light of truth beams from the eternal world. The goſpel illumines the darkneſs of nature, and opens to my view life and immortality—All I poſſeſs below is but the earneſt of a better hope above. I dare eat and drink to the glory of God, acknowledging the Giver in his gifts; enjoy my mercies as from him, and look forward with delight and expectation of greater and better ſtore for me, when I ſhall "be

" abſent from the body and preſen
" with the Lord."*

The life of a Chriſtian has indeed been often repreſented in a forbidding view, as deſtitute of delight, cut off from enjoyment, and devoted to melancholy—Falſe religion is indeed moroſe and gloomy, placing excellence in will worſhip, and needleſs auſterities, but the ways of true religion are " pleaſantneſs, and all " her paths are peace"§—We are debarred from nothing but what would be prejudicial to our happineſs: and many of the higheſt examples of chriſtian excellence have found experimentally, that " godlineſs hath the pro-
" mi

* 2 Cor. v. 8. § Prov. viii. 17.

miſe of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come"*—Indeed as our adorable Lord hath ſaid, we have always "meat to eat, which the world knoweth not of."†

But ſovereign are the diſpenſations of Providence; and we know, they are *all* wiſe and gracious—As ſuffering is the common lot of humanity, the faithful ſhare in it with their fellows, and ſometimes endure a croſs peculiar to themſelves.—It is in the hour of affliction and the day of calamity, that the glory of a Chriſtian's ſupport peculiarly appears, "for as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo

 "our

* 1 Tim. iv. 8. † John iv. 32.

" our conſolation alſo aboundeth by
" Chriſt."*

How poor are the arguments that Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, can ſuggeſt compared with the ſupports which the book of God affords—It is here in a diſtinguiſhed manner, that we riſe more than conquerors " through Him that hath loved us."†

Afflictions to us are not the ſtrokes of an angry God, calling for expiations, or only to be alleviated by patience as inevitable; they originate in paternal tenderneſs, and mark the kind intereſt, which the father of mercies and God of all conſolation takes

* 2 Cor. i. 5. † Rom. viii. 37.

in his redeemed people. "Whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth."* The deſign of every croſs is to produce more abundant good to thoſe who are exerciſed thereby—No chaſtiſement is inflicted but there is a *need* † for it; which if we perceive not at the inſtant, we ſhall ſee, and acknowledge hereafter‡—Our ſufferings are *light*§ compared with what our Lord might juſtly have inflicted; and leſs than our iniquity deſerves, ſo that complaint is ſilenced before conſcious humiliation—*Support* is aſſured to, and provided for us, by him who will not ſuffer us to be tempted "above what we are able;"‖ and who,

* Heb. xii. 6. † 1 Pet. i. 6. ‡ John xiii. 7.
§ 2 Cor. iv. 17. ‖ 1 Cor. x. 13.

who, having been tempted himſelf, can be compaſſionate from experience of our infirmity, and, tenderly feeling for us, will aſſuredly and effectually ſuccour thoſe that are tempted.* *The patience* he works is the earneſt of the bleſſing, which he intends to beſtow, when the temptation "ſhall work peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs,"† and they ſhall ripen into glory—Beſides it is but *for a moment*, and however ſharp the conflict the victory is ſure. "Our light affliction "tions which are but for a moment "work for us a far more exceeding "and eternal weight of glory."‡

* Heb. ii. 18. † Heb. xii. 11. ‡ 2 Cor. iv.

In caſting thus but a rapid, tranſient view on this epitome of goſpel-conſolation to the afflicted, how does it outweigh in ſolid grounds of ſupport, all that moraliſts have written, or philoſophers taught, as far as the ſterling gold, the down of the thiſtle.

But when we advert to the cloſing ſcene of this ſhort momentary life, and *death*, however forgotten by the many, or however, fortified with ſcepticiſm, the infidel heart may ſeem to brave it, *death*, the king of terrors advances, to awaken the fears and appal the conſcience of the departing ſinner; what can then afford a gleam of conſolation, or ſtrengthen our

our hearts for that awful conflict? How poor, how contemptible, how inefficacious, are the ſurmiſes of philoſophy, and the ſuggeſtions of natural religion? How dark, how gloomy; to ſay no worſe, are the proſpects of infidelity? like "the bowing wall and like the tottering fence,"* ready to ruſh down upon and cruſh thoſe who take refuge under their trembling ſhade.

But in the valley of the ſhadow of death, the goſpel of our great God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt ſhines with tranſcendent luſtre——He that brighter than the ſun paſſed that way to his throne in heaven hath left the abiding

* Pſalm lxii. 2.

iding ſplendour of his luminous
in to irradiate the untried path;
d promiſing his preſence and the
ht of his countenance bids us "fear
no evil"* The evidence, which he
th given us of his own reſurrection,
ſtson proofs ſure and infallible,† and
" we know him and the power of
his reſurrection,"‖ not only every
ror is diſarmed and every doubt
ſpelled, but the aſſurance of hope
ndles in the heart " a deſire to de-
rt, and be with Chriſt;"‡ marking
th delight the print of his footſteps
the duſt of death, we ſee before us
de expanded in the grave, the
lden gates of life and immortality,
through

* Pſalm xxiii. 4. † Acts i. 3.
‖ Philip. iii. 10. ‡ Philip. i. 23.

through which he paſſed, and follow
him to a joyful reſurrection.

Dare any ſupercilious unbeliever
call this a fond imagination—I chal-
lenge him to ſhew, that ſince the ſu
gilded this firmament, there was ever
a fact in hiſtory attended with th
evidence, and atteſted with ſuch ve
racity, as accompanies our Lord'
reſurrection from the dead, and thi
fact eſtabliſhed, the reſt are admitte
corollaries from a demonſtrated pro
poſition.

But call it credulity, call it enthu
ſiaſm, call it folly, what hath wi
dom, what hath ſcepticiſm, what have
theſe rationaliſts to ſuggeſt in its ſtead

that can produce any ſuch deſirable effects, or be attended with ſuch happy conſequences for the comfort of mankind living or dying? By whatever fatal neceſſity, the infidel, ſuppoſing himſelf influenced, perſiſts in unbelief, and tramples on the goſpel hope and happineſs; his attempt to depreciate theſe in the eſtimation of others without offering them the leaſt equivalent, for the ſupport which he labours to undermine, muſt leave him inexcuſable to his own conſcience, and ſtamp him in the judgment of every truly wiſe and thinking mind—

THE ENEMY OF MANKIND.

ESSAY

ESSAY VI.

ON THE UNIFORMITY OF TRUTH.

TRUTH, like the divine Original from whence it poceeds, muſt be uniform. God is in one mind; with him there can be "no variableneſs, "nor ſhadow of turning,"*

Whenever he is pleaſed to reveal his will to the children of men, the whole

* James i. 17.

whole will be perfectly consistent nor is it possible that any thing contradictory should preceed from him. If there be any seeming difference in passages of the divine record, or any darkness or doubt respecting his meaning, it must flow from the imbecillity of our intellects, or the corruption of our hearts, which indispose us to receive the truth in simplicity, and godly sincerity.

The Scripture is not given us as wax, for us to mould into shape according to the size and fancy of our own minds, but as the graven figure to impress its image upon us, which the more perfectly we receive the greater will be our blessedness.

It may be aſked then, What is truth? I reply, "If ye will enquire, "enquire ye."* "To the word and "the teſtimony,"‡ "Comparing ſpi-"ritual things with ſpiritual;"† and looking up to him, "who giveth "wiſdom and underſtanding to the "ſimple."§

That opinions manifold, and contradictory, impious, and blaſphemous, have in every age been advanced as derived from the great repoſitory of divine truth, the Bible, muſt with grief be acknowledged. It behoves us therefore to be on our guard, and to take heed how we hear; that our

* Iſai. xxi. 12.
† 1 Cor. ii. 13.
‡ Iſai. viii. 20.
§ Pſalm cvix 130.

our concluſions, may not be the fru
of prejudice, or the preſumptions
education, but the reſult of convi
tion.

Let it be obſerved by the way, th
the diſputes about religious opinio
have been often carried on with
much acrimony and aſperity, as b
too clearly demonſtrate, that whi
ever party may approach the near
to truth, the diſputants themſelves
leaſt have not attaind unto it. If "t
" wiſdom from above is pure, peac
" able, gentle, and eaſy to be intrea
" ed, full of mercy and good fruit
" without partiality or wrangli
" (αδιακριτος) and without hypocriſy,

* James iii. 17.

angry controverſaliſt will hardly nvince us he is in the right—We uſt ſuſpect that his underſtanding is fective, ſince we have ſuch evi-nce that his ſpirit is unſubdued.

The great maſter hath warned us ainſt becoming the diſciples of men, d enjoined us to ſearch the ſcrip-res that we may in them find the y to eternal life; and whenever we ſo with diligence, meekneſs, and yer, we may humbly hope, that atever darkneſs may remain, or ſtake be yet entertained, (for who be perfect in knowledge?) it will be of a fatal nature, nor prevent holding the Head Chriſt, and be-found in him.

The ſcripture containing a ſyſte
of uniform and connected truth, t
diſcover that connection, and trac
the order of the parts, as forming on
glorious whole, ſhould be our con
ſtant object and purſuit. Many hav
exploded ſyſtems, and oppoſed creed
as being all human devices, but ſure
ly it is hardly poſſible to read th
ſcripture in purſuit of truth and no
to form a ſyſtem, and a creed in con
ſequence of the enquiry. Whatever
others may ſay, or think, reſpecting
our opinions, it is hardly poſſible w
ſhould ſatisfy ourſelves in the ſenti
ments we embrace, but as they appe
to us at leaſt *a conſiſtent whole*--and whe
many concur in the ſame ſentiment
and unite in the ſame confeſſion o
faith

faith, creed and ſyſtem neceſſarily follow.

What right any man, or any body of men hath to *impoſe* ſuch ſyſtem or creed on *others* is a different matter, and may be anſwered without heſitation. No man ever was bound, or ever can be bound, by any authority derived from God's word, to ſubſcribe to the opinion of another, contrary to his own; or to admit that to be true of which his conſcience is not convinced—Where any ſuch impoſition ſubſiſts with penalty on refuſal, muſt be the abſurdity of cruelty to puniſh a man for his opinions, which depend not on his will, but his underſtanding; and the abſurdity of

folly to ſuppoſe, that compelling a man to an act of hypocriſy can ever lead to the knowledge of the truth.

But if a body of men, concurring in the profeſſion of what they believe a conſiſtent ſyſtem of divine truth, form a number of articles expreſſive of their faith; and in order to prevent diverſity of opinions in the church communion, in which they unite, expect all, who chuſe to worſhip with them, to ſubſcribe their aſſent and approbation bona fide and ex animo to the ſame liturgy, what impoſition or hardſhip is to be complained of in ſuch voluntary ſubſcription, whilſt complete liberty is left to others to refuſe their aſſent, and pro-

fe

ſs a different opinion? and if acci-
ntally ſome worldly emolument be
nexed to ſuch profeſſion, of which
oſe who reject ſuch a ſyſtem of doc-
nes would eventually be deprived,
injury is inflicted. They who
ovided thoſe emoluments annexed
them theſe conditions. They had
ight to do ſo. The hypocrite, who
kes his conſcience ſubmit to his
nvenience, is certainly no acqui-
ion to the party he joins, nor loſs
the party he deſerts.

The neceſſity of conſiſtence in
timent, and the conviction, that
th muſt be uniform in itſelf, hath
refore led thoſe who reverence
ſacred records to form articles

of faith and bodies of divinity deduced, as they conceive, from the word of God, and however different they may be in reality from each other, every perſon according to the ſyſtem, which he embraces, ſuppoſes his own conſiſtent, and encumbered with the leaſt objections.

In all theſe ſyſtems, there are ſome general poſitions, in which all profeſs to agree, ſuch as—the being of a God—his perfections—and the neceſſity of obedience to his revealed will—but when we deſcend to the mode of his ſubſiſtence,—what his revealed will contains—what are the principles—and what the particulars of the obedience which

which he enjoins—here they begin to differ, ſometimes greatly to differ. Yet however great the diverſity of opinions may be found, it is certain, that but one can be true; and ſurely it ſhould be our firſt and chief concern to diſcover, where the real truth lies. The guide is unerring, and if we are not led in the right way, the fault lies not in the deficiency of information, but in the ignorance, infirmity, or prejudices of the enquirers.

The primary grand object of all religion is to diſcover and know the true God, and in chriſtianity here begins the firſt ſtriking diviſion of opinions between thoſe

who confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is one in the eſſence of Jehovah, and to be worſhipped as ſuch, and thoſe, who deny his eternal glory and Godhead. Which of theſe opinions is moſt conſiſtent and correſpondent with the ſcriptures of truth, I have endeavoured to ſhew in a former Eſſay. I ſhall therefore here add nothing more, than that this has conſtituted from the beginning, in the profeſſing church of Chriſt, the leading feature, and the firſt grand line of diviſion, and given riſe to the names of Orthodox or Heterodox. I mention not theſe names as implying cenſure, or approbation of thoſe, who maintain different ſentiments on this ſubject; "to his own "maſter

maſter every man ſtandeth or fall-
eth,"* and not at all by the opi-
ions of his fellow mortals.

Paſſing by the diviſions, which
ubſiſt among thoſe who are called
eterodox, whether Arians, Semiari-
ns, Socinians or Sabellians, &c.
ſhall confine myſelf to the con-
deration of ſuch opinions, as prin-
ipally divide thoſe, who bear the
ame of Orthodoxy.

Among the orthodox we may
eckon as admitted principles, the
piritual nature of God—his triune
ode of ſubſiſtence—the eſſential
ivinity of Jeſus Chriſt---and of

* Rom. xiv. 4.

the Holy Ghoſt---the expiatory ſa-
crifice, and ſatisfaction, made by
the offering of the body of Jeſus
once for all---the neceſſity of faith
in him, in order to our acceptance
with God---and the practice of true
holineſs, thence proceeding. But
when men come to explain them-
ſelves, reſpecting the exerciſe of
divine grace and favor in the com-
munication of this knowledge, and
theſe bleſſings to mankind, their re-
preſentations differ; and as they
proceed in the conſideration of the
divine ſovereignty, and juſtice--
the extent and deſign of the atone-
ment made---the nature and effica-
cy of divine grace---the ſtate of
the creature as fallen---the power,

with which he is endued---the freedom or impotence of his will in the choice of good and evil---with other points of doctrine connected with theſe---the more they diſpute, the farther the lines appear diverging from each other; and two different ſyſtems of opinions are formed, each of which, we muſt ſuppoſe, after deliberate conſideration of the ſubject, hath been adopted by thoſe, who eſpouſe them, as moſt perfectly conſiſtent with the word of God and with themſelves.

Theſe two grand diviſions are generally known among us by the terms Arminian and Calviniſtic---Not that Calvin or Arminius were

the authors of theſe opinions. We know, that they were agitated in the Chriſtian church long before thoſe men were born: but having, at, or ſhortly after the time of the happy reformation, ſeverally eſpouſed theſe different ſyſtems of opinon —having occaſioned much inveſtigation, and many treatiſes to be written on the ſubject---and produced ſolemn national deciſions on theſe doctrinal and conteſted points —their names have become declaratory of the general tenor of our faith in theſe diſputed poſitions. It is a great abuſe, if names be conſidered as terms of reproach on either ſide.

To enter fully into the review of the Calviniſtic and Arminian controverſy would demand volumes inſtead of pages---too much has been already written in the ſpirit of bitterneſs, and too little in the ſpirit of love and meekneſs. The ſubject hath been largely treated by Limborch, Turretin, Uſher, Burnet, Gill, Goodwin, Weſley, and Toplady. They, who conſult theſe, will ſee the matter handled with all the weapons, which ſcience and ingenuity on both ſides, and ſometimes I am afraid, diſingenuity can ſuggeſt. Each preſuming their ſyſtem alone uniform, and conſiſtent, and that of their adverſaries inconſequent and ſelf-contradictory. Truth

is

is of the laſt importance, it deſerves the cloſeſt inveſtigation. The appeal on both ſides is made to the oracles of God. They ſhould therefore be carefully read, marked, learned and inwardly digeſted: comparing ſcripture with ſcripture, as the beſt interpreter of itſelf, and ſince but one of theſe opinions can be true, it is clearly our duty to embrace that, which to us appears ſupported by the cleareſt ſcripture Evidence.

After diligent examination, and uſing the beſt helps I could procure, the reſult of my convictions I muſt acknowledge, has decidedly fixed me in the doctrines termed

Calviniſtic.

Calviniſtic. And I ſee them no where more conciſely and ſimply ſtated than in thoſe articles of religion in our church, to which we, as her miniſters, have given our plenary aſſent. They exhibit to our view the moſt glorious and conſiſtent character of the ſcripture God---open moſt fully and clearly, the corruption and guilt of all mankind---Explain in the moſt ſatisfactory and endearing manner, the great myſtery of Redemption wrought out by him, who is God manifeſt in the fleſh. They declare the neceſſity and *certain* efficacy of his ſubſtitution and ſacrifice for the purpoſes to which it was appointed. They aſcribe the moſt tranſcendent honour to God reſulting

reſulting from the exerciſe of his grace as ſovereign and free,—ſuggeſting withal, the neceſſity of newneſs of life, and pointing out the moſt effectual means to ſecure, the fidelity of the redeemed, in the exerciſe of every holy temper, and in the practice of every good word and work.

That this ſyſtem of religious truth, through the imperfection of our poor ſhort-ſighted underſtanding, is liable to difficulties and objections, muſt be acknowledged, but to much fewer, and of a far different kind, than thoſe, which preſs on the oppoſite ſide. Admitting, (as we always mean to be underſtood in every ſtatement of our opinions) that he

who

ho *ordained the end ordains the means*,
d that faith and obedience are in
e order of ſalvation *inſeparably con-*
ected with the recompenſe of reward;
n the Calviniſtic plan, every ex-
reſſion and ſentiment of the bible
eak an uniform language and
rpoſe, and lead to an adequate
fect: While on the Arminian
heme, we muſt either ſuppoſe that
od does not foreknow the actions
men, or that his foreknowledge
es not imply a certainty of the
rreſponding event---that the ſal-
tion of God never was, and in
e nature of things never could
certainly ſecured to any *one* of
e children of Adam, ſince it was
the power of every man's own
will

will to prevent its taking effect. That Jeſus Chriſt might have died for their redemption, and yet not one individual of the human race have been benefited by his oblation. Theſe and other poſitions of a ſimilar kind apparently deducible from the principles laid down by the Arminians ſtrike me I own, as very contrary to the whole tenor of the book of God.

The language and ſentiments of our Lord's laſt diſcourſe, and his prayer for his diſciples---the doctrines and reaſonings contained in the epiſtle of Paul to the Romans, with innumerable paſſages in the other epiſtles, as well as the correſponding

ſponding expreſſions throughout the
hole book of God, theſe can ſcarce
ith any ſemblance of truth, be
id, to be fairly reconcileable with
y language or reaſoning, that
rminians conſiſtent with their princi-
es could naturally, nay, as we ſup-
oſe, poſſibly uſe. And as to the
omotion of *true holineſs* and guard-
g againſt falſe hopes and carnal
curity, tho' conſtantly ſuggeſted,
owever great their apprehenſions and
udable their zeal may be; we join
ith them in equal jealouſy at leaſt
d emulation for the advancement
theſe great and deſireable ends;
rſuaded, that on our principles
ey are more abundantly provided
, the *one* more carefully *ſecured*,
and

and the *other* more effectuall *prevented.*

It is no doubt of the firſt importance to know "the truth as it is "in Jeſus;* and ſince the ſcripture cannot contain oppoſite meanings, nor any paſſage in that book be deſtitute of one preciſe determinate ſenſe, it muſt altogether form one conſiſtent whole, and it ſhould be our labour, ſtudy, and prayer, clearly, fully, decidedly, to form our judgment of the truth revealed; and to "contend earneſtly for the "faith which was once delivered to "the ſaints."† But let it be our great concern, amidſt the contention

* Eph. iv. 21. † Jude 3.

ion to "ſpeak that truth in love"* that all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking, be put away from us with all malice, as becometh ſaints."† Do we ſee, or think we ſee, more diſtinctly than our neighbour? If we judge of objects differently, ſhall we revile him, becauſe we ſuppoſe he has not as accute powers of vision as we have?

Let the Arminian and Calviniſt therefore conſider wherein, and how far, they agree, rather than begin at the moſt diſtant points of difference. I dont mean that their differencies can ever be completely

* Eph. iv. 15. † Eph. iv. 31.

ly reconciled, or that they are unimportant. We certainly eſteem our ſentiments on the whole, both for comfort and holineſs of the laſt importance. But let us be careful, not to charge each other raſhly, with conſequences, as flowing from the ſeveral principles, which they who hold them, will in no wiſe admit, as fairly deducible from them and perhaps utterly diſclaim.

It would ſurely be moſt deſirable, even where we differ, always to preſent the ſmoother ſurfaces of the oppoſing bodies, that they may approach each other nearer and more harmleſsly, and not by the colliſion of their rough and angular

oints elicit the ſparks of contro-
erſy, till they kindle into the flame
f enmity.

There are principles, that the moſt
xperienced in divine knowledge
f both parties profeſs cordially to
old. The guilt, miſery, and ruin
f a fallen nature—the atonement
f God our Saviour as the grand
emedial means appointed for the de-
liverance of the ſinner from the curſe
nd wages of ſin, and the neceſſity
f the Holy Ghoſt to enlighten, and
enew our hearts in the image of
od. Avowing therefore mutually
ur dependence on Chriſt alone
r pardon, peace, and life eternal,
tho'

tho' in ſtating particulars, we u
a different mode of expreſſion t
convey our ideas or entertain
real diverſity of ſentiment in th
manner of obtaining the faith, an
holineſs, which lead to ſalvation;
yet let us be cautious not to an-
thematize each other, nor condem
any man, who profeſſes to believe,
that there is no hope or *redemptio*
for a fallen ſinner, but in a crucifi
Jeſus, and whoſe lips and life give
evidence, that "he loves the Lor
Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity."

ESSA

ESSAY VII.

THE UNIFORMITY OF OUR LITURGY WITH THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION, AND THEIR CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE TRUTH OF THE PRECEEDING ESSAY.

WHEN our venerable reformers, having reſcued the church of England from the errors and idolatry of Popery, deſired to form the moſt effectual barrier they could deviſe, againſt the readmiſſion of falſe doc-

trine, they drew up the thirty-nine articles of religion, as the ſtandard, by which the opinions of thoſe ſhould be regulated, who in future were permitted in our communion to miniſter in holy things.

As a body of men, ſo wiſe, ſo pious, and in every view ſo reſpectable, muſt be preſumed to have formed a ſyſtem of truth, in their own view at leaſt uniform and ſelf-conſiſtent, the doctrines which they publiſhed to the world, as the ſubſtance of their own faith, muſt have *one preciſe and determinate meaning*; and according to the ſenſe affixed by themſelves, they certainly intended the articles ſhould be

underſtood, and received by thoſe, ho choſe church memberſhip with em. To prevent all doubt on e ſubject, they declare it to be e avowed intention of their com- lation, and of the ſubſcription hich they required, *to prevent diver- y of opinion*, that with one mind, d one mouth, we ſhould be united the ſame faith, and the ſame con- ſſion, and form thus one homoge- ous body.

To ſubſcribe ſuch articles in a ſe clearly different from that, ich the compilers of them intend- muſt argue a very inexcuſable d criminal ignorance, if not an er want of conſcience, and as in-

excuſable and criminal would it be to pretend, after having ſubſcribed them, that they admit a *latitude of interpretation*, though the preciſion, with which the doctrines are expreſſed, forbid ſuch an idea, even if the very expreſs declaration, that it was their intention to prevent it, had not prefaced them, and eſpecially, when this *latitude of interpretation*, pleaded for, is manifeſtly contradictory to the whole tenor of the ſentiments of the reformers, expreſſed in a variety of their other valuable works, as well as militating againſt the liturgy, which theſe men profeſs to reverence.

Yet not even content with *latitude of interpretation* for themſelves, how many high in honour and office, who poſſeſs their vaſt emoluments under the cover of ſubſcription, look very unfavourably upon thoſe who profeſs to hold what to us appears the true ſentiments of the church, yea, many times treat them with aſperity, and very unkind uſage, on this account, making their holding theſe doctrines avowedly their plea and excuſe for ſo doing, than which it is hardly poſſible to conceive any thing more unreaſonable, and more contrary to every idea of truth, candor, and uprightneſs among men.

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That the whole ſyſtem of the church of England is in perfect correſpondence with the doctrines uſually termed Calviniſtic, it is difficult to deny, if the articles are to be taken in their literal and grammatical ſenſe; and I know of no authority that can admit of ſubſcription to them in any other. No man who did not hold thoſe tenets, ever did, or ever would expreſs himſelf in the manner, language and phraſeology therein delivered. For experiment's ſake let a page of any work of modern divinity treating of a doctrinal ſubject be tranſcribed, and the article correſponding thereto be ſet in an oppoſite column, and let any man

of the leaſt meaſure of diſcern-ment ſay, if they contain ſimilar truths, and convey the ſame ideas, reſembling the counterparts of the ſame check; or rather, if they do not demonſtrate total oppoſition and incongruency; quadrata rotundis.

Did a ſingle expreſſion, ſtand in ſome dubious relation, that might admit diverſity of interpretation, the rational mode of elucidating the ſenſe, would be by referring to the author himſelf, ſpeaking in his other works on a ſimilar ſubject, it is thus we ſhould explain the terms uſed and ſentiments ſuggeſted by an antient Greek or Roman author. But in the articles of our church, the

doctrines are clearly, fully, preciſely expreſſed—ſtand in a relation to others contained in the ſame body of truths, which ſerve to illuſtrate and confirm each other reciprocally. And if we refer to the works of the compilers themſelves, in all the numerous volumes which they have left us on theſe ſubjects, ſo far from the ſhadow of ſuch interpretations, as have been foiſted on theſe articles, they all, uno ore, maintain one uniform ſyſtem of faith. Nor can there I apprehend be a page from their writings produced which would countenance the moſt diſtant idea, that their ſentiments were not ſuch, as they themſelves avowed; *uniformly, and conſiſtently Calviniſtic.*

Calviniſtic. Was there a ſingle divine of eminence in the days of Edward or Elizabeth, who dared ſuggeſt the contrary, without receiving public cenſure as erroneous? If there was one biſhop dignitary or inferior divine engaged in the compoſition of our articles, liturgy, or homilies who was not in faith and hope Calviniſtic, let him come forth and ſpeak on the behalf of modern divinity.

Diſputes among ourſelves have rendered us perhaps not the moſt impartial judges; let our foreign brethren in France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and every country of Proteſtantiſm ſay, what is their

view of our religious eſtabliſhment, with regard to the ſyſtem of doctrines in the church of England. Had there been ever a poſſibility of doubt to them on the ſubject, our embaſſy at the ſynod of Dort muſt have deciſively determined their opinion.

Some among us indeed have endeavoured to ſet the liturgy at varience with the articles, and to wreſt that into their ſervice. They might indeed too frequently and fairly bring deſk verſus pulpit into court and have a verdict of inconſiſtency, but the articles and liturgy are like the viſions of Pharaoh, they are one,

one, and the interpretation of them the ſame.

From the firſt act of initiation at baptiſm, to the depoſiting the remains of the faithful in the duſt, the whole liturgy ſpeaks one language, which as I apprehend, they only uſe conſcientiouſly, comfortably, confidently, whoſe ſentiments are really conformable to the pattern ſhewed them in the articles.

Since all men are by nature children of wrath, and muſt be baptized with water and the Holy Ghoſt, before they can enter into the kingdom of God, our church admits infants to the ſeal of the

covenant as being in the judgment of charity *elect children*, as the children of profeſſionally believing parents, and receiving additional ſecurity, for their being taught as ſoon as they ſhall be able to learn, the ſolemn profeſſion made for them, and the obligations thence reſulting.

Now according to the analogy of our ſentiments, to be elect, and regenerate of the Holy Ghoſt are, as links in the ſame chain, inſeparable; that is to ſay, every regenerate perſon is elect, and every elect perſon "choſen from the be-"ginning to ſalvation, through ſanc-"tification of the Spirit, to obedi-"ence."* The ſeals of the covenant are

* 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 2.

are appropriate to thoſe only, who have an intereſt in the bleſſings of it.

We ſcarce begin to articulate before every perſon, I will not ſay, of devotion, but even decency, thinks it fitting, that his infant ſhould learn the Lord's prayer. In the preface to which our reformers have taken very particular care to remind us, that we ſhould inform the child, he can do nothing pleaſing to God, without his *ſpecial* grace, for which he muſt aſk in diligent prayer, this being the privilege, as well as the duty of every elect child.

The

The *ſpeciality of grace* is the conſequence of the ſentiments adopted. Thoſe who maintain the doctrines of predeſtination to life, and none beſides, can conſiſtently admit of ſuch *ſpecial* and peculiar grace. If ſpecial and peculiar, then not common or univerſal.

The firſt moment our memory is capable of forming ideas of divine things, that excellent epitome of truth, the church catechiſm is inſtilled into us. There in the expoſition of the apoſtles creed, we are informed that the Holy Ghoſt ſanctifieth *me* and all the *elect people* of God, and I as baptized into the faith of God's elect, expreſs my perſuaſion

perſuaſion of union with them; being one body, we are all animated by the ſame Spirit. The redemption is complete, perfect, eternal, for the whole body of the church, embracing all mankind, not every individual of the human race, but *all* without national peculiarity, barbarian, ſcythian, bond or free, *all* taken and *called* out of every tongue, and people, and kindred, and nation. The Holy Ghoſt whoſe peculiar office it is to take of the things of Chriſt and to ſhew them to us, *manifeſts* the elect people of God by enlightening their minds to embrace the redemption, and divinely influencing their hearts with ſpecial and efficacious grace, faith working

ing

ing by love, and bringing forth fruit unto eternal life. Thus all is ſimple, conſiſtent, uniform.

When we are grown up and capable of joining with intelligence in the church ſervice, (and highly neceſſary it is we ſhould know the import of our own prayers, and pray with the ſpirit and pray with the underſtanding alſo) we are called upon to aſſemble in the houſe of God, and join in the form of ſound words contained in the book of common prayer, and they who neglect to do ſo, being profeſſionally members of the church, give an unequivocal proof, that they at leaſt have no part or lot in the matter.

The

The whole tenor of this liturgical ſervice from the beginning to the end correſponds with the ideas before ſuggeſted. The elect as redeemed from ſin and death, through the atoning blood, approach the throne of grace—are aſſured of pardon and abſolution—obtain grace to help in every time of need—and are as really ſtrengthened and refreſhed in their ſouls by the body and blood of Chriſt, as their natural bodies are by bread and wine. He makes his *choſen people* joyful: *we dwell in Chriſt, and Chriſt in us,* we are *one with Chriſt, and Chriſt with us,* we are *his family, his flock,* the ſheep for whom he laid down his life. We are taught to intercede for Jews, Turks, and Infidels,

fidels, but it is that they may be ſaved according to the election of God, *among the remnant of the true Iſraelites.* As to ourſelves, *we acknowledge,* that *it is his ſpecial grace* PREVENTING US, *that doth put into our minds good deſires,* and we pray that *he would continually help us to bring the ſame to good effect,* that *as thine elect in one holy communion and fellowſhip, we may come to thoſe unſpeakable joys, which thou haſt prepared.* To multiply quotations would be endleſs, where every collect proceeds upon and expreſſes the ſame principles, avouches theſe peculiar ſentiments, and teaches us to uſe language and expreſſions, which only

can

can flow from, and are compatible with the *faith of God's elect.*

And when we aſſemble to pay our laſt mournful reſpects to the bodies of our departed brethren, dying as they lived in the Lord, ſince the Spirit and the Bride ſay come, we reply in the correſponding language of believing prayer that it may pleaſe our adorable Lord and Saviour *ſhortly to accompliſh the number of his elect and to haſten his kingdom.* Theſe expreſſions and ſentiments all unequivocally ſpeak, (if words can ſpeak) the true faith of our church, and of all its *real* members.—Any alteration therefore ſo often pleaded for, either by ſuppreſſing

ſing articles obnoxious or totally aboliſhing ſubſcription would really make no difference unleſs the whole of the liturgy ſhould be diſpenſed with, or new modelled, and even then the matter would not be mended. Are our prayers, if we uſe them at all to take their model from opinions Arminian, Socinian, Arian, or Deiſtical? for conſiſtency and uniformity muſt be admitted as neceſſary by every man of any pretence to truth and religion. The ſame objections would commence againſt any *new form of prayer*, and if I miſtake not with redoubled violence. I own, though nothing of human compoſition can be perfectly

ſectly unexceptionable, I am very partial to *the old one.*

I pretend not to affirm, that becauſe the church of England ſo believes, the argument is concluſive, that it muſt be true: I affirm only, that it muſt be concluſive againſt all who profeſs to be members of her communion.

That the articles, homilies, and liturgy taken in their literal and grammatical ſenſe, ſpeak uniformly one ſyſtem of divine truth, and that this, and this alone, we who are miniſters of her communion are bound to preach and teach, has been, I hope clearly demonſtrated. And

I appeal to Jews, Turks, and Infidels, as well as every Proteſtant church in the world for the juſtice of the plea, and the truth of the argument.

But if I have failed of demonſtrating to others, what has appeared ſo evident to myſelf, and ſhould many among my brethren ſuppoſe themſelves ſtill juſtified in giving a different interpretation to the expreſſions we mutually concur in employing,

*Hanc ſaltem veniam damus petimusque viciſſim.**

Let not thoſe who conſider the whole of the queſtion with impartiality,

* Let us grant each other at leaſt mutual indulgence.

tiality, refuſe us the acknowledgment, that the view of truth preſented in the preceding pages is ſupported by no contemptible force of Evidence, nor treat ſuch as hold the doctrines for which we plead, as irrational and abſurd. They will, I truſt, find them, on deeper and more mature conſideration, if not concluſive to produce conviction, in themſelves at leaſt, ſufficiently powerful to entitle *us* who maintain them, to their candor and reſpect.

ESSAY

ESSAY VIII.

ON THE FEWNESS OF THOSE WHO SHALL BE SAVED.

THAT the redeemed of the Lord, when they are collected together out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and language, will be a multitude which "no man can number," is a truth which ſhall be glorioufly verified in the day, when God ſhall accompliſh the number of his elect and haſten his kingdom; but

that they are and ever have been in every age or country comparatively few, it ſeems impoſſible to doubt without rejecting the moſt explicit teſtimonies of him that cannot lie.

The idea of eternal miſery and torment is ſo painful to our minds, and bears ſo hard on our ſelf-love and natural preſumption, that we feel reluctant to ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God; and not withſtanding all the declarations of his word, would fain extend the pale of ſalvation, ſo far at eaſt, as to include ourſelves. But when we come to the inveſtigation of the truth, it matters not, what our fond imagination would wiſh or ſuppoſe, but what the will of unerring

Wiſdom and inflexible juſtice hath determined, and what his unchangeable word hath declared. "Thus and "thus ſaith the Lord," nor dare we ſtep one line beyond the ſacred circle.

If we refuſe to bow down in ſilence before him, and ſubmit to the deciſions of his revealed word, we may indeed indulge the reveries of falſe hope, and ſceptical deluſion, but it will be found at laſt, that there is "a lie in our right hand,"* and that "the counſel of the Lord, that ſhall "ſtand."‡

* Iſai. xliv. 20. ‡ Prov. xix. 21.

Suppoſing myſelf therefore at preſent reaſoning with thoſe, who are willing to be ſhut up within the ſacred circle of revealed truth, there will be little difficulty in the fulleſt confirmation of the poſition, which is laid down that "there are few that ſhall "be ſaved."†

Nor need we at all dread the abſurd idea of uncharitableneſs. The nobleſt and moſt exalted charity is to preſerve immortal ſouls from the errors of vain hope and falſe confidence, and to exert every vigorous effort to carry that knowledge which bringeth ſalvation into the regions of darkneſs and the ſhadow of death. The

† Matt. vii. 14.

The truth muſt remain eternally the ſame, "whether men will hear, or "whether they will forbear."* Nor will the deluded thank their deceivers, who have rocked the cradle of ſecurity, crying, "Peace, peace, and "there is no peace,"§ when cloſing their eyes dreaming of Heaven, they ſhall lift them up in torment.

It is impoſſible to read the book of God with any attention, without obſerving the expreſs declaration, repeatedly made, after deſcribing the works and characters of different ſorts of men, that "they who do ſuch "things ſhall not inherit the king-

 "dom

* Ezek. ii. 5. § Jere. vi. 14.

" dom of God."† To ſave the trou-
ble of tranſcribing, and engage you
to an attentive conſideration of the
ſcriptures themſelves, read and deli-
berately meditate upon the following
paſſages of the bible: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.
Gal. v. 19, 21. Epheſians v. 5, 6.
Philip. iii. 18, 19. Romans i. 25, 34.
Rev. xxi. 8. Rev. xxii. 15. Theſe
are but a few out of the many quota-
tions, which might be adduced in
proof of the doctrine advanced, exhi-
biting more multiplied characters of
ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs and
enlarging the number of thoſe, a-
gainſt whom " the wrath of God is
" revealed from Heaven."‡

Not

† 1 Cor. vi. 9. ‡ Rom. i. 18.

Nor is it merely where the brand is ſeen viſibly in the right hand, or on the forehead of thoſe, who do ſuch things, that the excluſion from God and glory reſts. To enter in at the ſtrait gate, which leadeth unto life, requires a ſtruggle and conflict againſt corruption within, and an enſnaring world without, which few are diſpoſed to undergo and therefore, "there "are few who find it."† When the groſſer pollutions of the world may have been avoided, the real change of heart and life eſſential to good hope may be unknown. "A man "muſt be born of the ſpirit before "he can ſee the kingdom of God"‡— he muſt have not merely the form, but

† Matt. vii. 14. ‡ John iii. 5.

the power of godlineſs, " continuing " inſtant in prayer—fervent in ſpirit " —ſerving the Lord."† Let the temper and character of the ſaints, which are in the earth and of thoſe who excel in virtue, as deſcribed in our charter of life, be conſidered, and in the view of the paucity of thoſe, who have any ſuch good hope through grace, ſhall we not be ready to cry out with the diſciples, " Who " then can be ſaved."?§

All truly ſerious men of every denomination in whatever other opinions they may differ, in this at leaſt they will agree. Whether ſuch a one be Calviniſt or Arminian, he will admit, that

† Rom. xii. 11, 12 § Luke xviii. 26.

that faith in all the redeemed worketh by love, and that without righteouſneſs and true holineſs, the profeſſion of religion is but hypocriſy, and chriſtianity but a name. Since then on both ſides it is admitted that "He "that believeth only can be ſaved,"‖ and that "without holineſs no man "ſhall ſee the Lord,"† how can one ſoul more be ſaved on the Arminian plan, or one leſs by the Calviniſtic? No conſiſtent Calviniſt ſuppoſes ſalvation attainable, but as "we are "created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good "works, God having before ordained "that we ſhould walk in them,"* and every Arminian muſt join with him

‖ Mark xvi. 16. † Heb. xii. 14.
* Epheſ. ii. 10.

in the anathema againſt " all who love " not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſince- " rity,"‡ and live not for him, who " died for us." But how few they are, who thus walk, and abide in his love, is too evident to admit of a doubt, and too afflictive, not to occaſion real cauſe of grief to every good man.

Caſt your eyes on the map of this terreſtrial globe and ſee how comparatively ſmall is the portion enlightened by the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and the bright beams of his revealed truth. Conſider in this ſpace that by far the moſt extenſive part hath debaſed the Chriſtian name with the falſe pomp of worſhip, and all the idolatry

‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

idolatry of heatheniſm.—Obſerve the deplorable ignorance and ſuperſtition, the errors and falſehoods in doctrine and practice, that have overſpread not only the Romiſh, but the Greek, Armenian, and Coptic Churches, by which the fair features of truth are ſo diſguiſed, that it is hardly poſſible to diſcern a trace of her original beauty. Some perhaps may yet be found in the midſt of this Egyptian darkneſs, and theſe groſs abominations, whom the life-giving word of God's book may reach, and who like the ſeven thouſand in the days of Iſrael's apoſtacy, God's ſecret ones, have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal: but let every man, who hath travelled

through theſe countries, with any real knowledge of the grace of God in his own heart, bear record and confeſs how few he hath ever met with in theſe regions of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, who appeared real followers of the Son of God, in the regeneration.

Nor do the Proteſtant churches abroad exhibit a much more favorable appearance. In Germany, France, Holland, nay even Switzerland, and Geneva once ſo illuſtrious; it can be no ſecret to any perſon, who examines into the ſtate of religion and religious ſentiments among them, how general is the defection from the principles of the

firſt

firſt reformers. A philoſophical ſpirit among the learned hath ſupplanted "the ſimplicity which is in "Chriſt."§ and diſſipation, worldly mindedneſs, indifference and lukewarmneſs, have ſhed their baneful influence on the multitude.

Amidſt all the overflowings of ungodlineſs, for our honour and comfort be it noticed, in the realms, which own the Britiſh ſway, more vital Chriſtianity will, I believe, be found, than in any nation under Heaven. And yet among *us*, the number who "walk in the light, as "children of the light,"‡ is comparatively diminutive. But truth will be called

§ 2 Cor. xi. 3. ‡ Eph. v. 8.

called reviling, and juſt cenſure, abuſe. Moſt cordially do I wiſh my judgment erroneous: may the number of the faithful among us exceed an hundred fold my fears! But let me ſpeak my preſent convictions; The Searcher of Hearts knows, it is not in a ſpirit of virulence, but of fidelity and love to mankind.

We might appeal to proclamations for the notoriety of prevailing diſſipation, vice and prophaneneſs, incompatible with every idea of religion; but he that runs may read it, in every rank of life from the higheſt to the loweſt, "The whole head is ſick, "and the whole heart is faint: from "the ſole of the foot, even to the "head,

"head, there is no ſoundneſs in it,
"but wounds, and bruiſes and pu-
"trifying ſores."§ The body of the nation exhibits the figure of a loathſome carcaſs, inſtead of a church walking in the beauty of holineſs.

May I without the charge of preſumption look up to him, who ſitteth on the throne: whoſe perſon, I reverence, and whoſe office, I honour; too far removed in obſcurity from the ſphere of majeſty to form a judgment, and only by report aſſured, that his eminence of ſtation ſhines but the more reſplendent in the practice of every domeſtic excellence, let me not therefore be charged as "ſpeaking

§ Iſai. i. 5, 6.

" ſpeaking evil of dignities," or " re-
" viling the ruler of my people," if I dare ſuggeſt to his conſideration, that if, as our *civil head*, among thoſe who moſt nearly approach his perſon, and manage his chief offices of ſtate, in whom he has promiſed by proclamation to ſuffer no immorality unchecked; if among theſe pillars of his throne, there ſhould be found men, infidel, profane, impure, drunken, the ſlaves of paſſion and pride, and ſold to work wickedneſs, will not a portion of ſuch guilt reſult on their maſter, when giving account to Him, by whom kings reign? And if as *head of the church* its moſt important ſeats be filled without reſpect to fidelity, zeal or reſemblance to Him,

who

who died on the croſs, and now ſitteth on the eternal throne; if influence, intereſt or worldly conſiderations have determined the choice, and thoſe are ſet up to feed the flock of Chriſt, whoſe uniform ſyſtem of earthly mindedneſs, indolence, and ambition, to ſay no more, demonſtrate that they have never entered into the fold by the Door, but climbed to theſe ſummits of eminence ſome other way—When He who is the great Head of the church, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ſhall appear, for ſuch advancements will there not be reſponſibility? The brows encircled with a diadem, ſtand in a ſtate of awful pre-eminence.

Before

Before the Judge of quick and dead, "there is no reſpect of perſons.†

Turn we to the higher ranks of life: it is obvious "not many wiſe, "not many mighty, not many noble "are called."‡ Pride, ambition, worldly purſuits, conteſts for power, or ſenſual indulgences occupy the great. Not that their vices are more or greater than thoſe of their inferiors, but they are more conſpicuous. If forgetfulneſs of God—If the moſt open diſregard for the ſabbath—If an univerſal neglect of God's worſhip public and private—If the utter deſertion of the table of the Lord—unleſs, horrible to tell! merely to *qualify*—

† Epheſ. vi. 9. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 26.

lify—If theſe ſtamp a character deſtitute of all chriſtianity, what ſhall we ſay when all the catalogue of prevailing iniquities, diſſipation, lewdneſs, luxury, venality, with the deluge of evil which ruſhes on every ſide, ſhall be added to the account. Are there not few among the great that can be ſaved? And ſhall not *the camel paſs the needle's eye*, ſooner than theſe into the kingdom of God!

The hand of the prieſts alſo hath been chief in the tranſgreſſion. The Clergy, worldly minded, proud, ambitious, idle, ignorant; however learned as philoſophers, linguiſts, or mathematicians, ignorant of that which is the moſt valuable wiſdom, the

the knowledge of a crucified Jeſus, and his grace, are "the blind leaders "of the blind." Are not the herd of dignitaries the chief ſtumbling blocks? Muſt not their whole purſuits, connections, conduct, convince the very infidel great, whom they fawn upon, and perſecute for preferment, that, if the ſyſtems inculcated in the epiſtles to Timothy and Titus be true, it is impoſſible theſe men ſhould believe one word more of Chriſtianity than themſelves. *

Nor

* Theſe were, as nearly as I can recollect, the very expreſſions uttered by a noble Lord of the moſt diſtinguiſhed attainments natural and acquired, in a converſation I once held with him, reſpecting the truth and evidence of Chriſtianity.

Nor are their inferiors diſſimilar; enſlaved by the ſame objects and occupied in the ſame purſuits, tho' not with the ſame advantages, commencing in thoſe corrupting ſeminaries our public ſchools—advancing in our grievouſly neglected univerſities, where amidſt all the circle of the ſciences, who ever thought of learning the knowledge of a crucified Jeſus—An idea that would be generally ſcouted—entering into the miniſtry (I appeal to the groaning conſciences of the examining chaplains, if they are men of any conſcience) how often ignorant of all ſcience but eſpecially of the doctrines of Chriſt, which they profeſs to teach —ſubſcribing articles they have hard-

ly

ly read, never conſidered; and generally diſbelieve. Opening and cloſing their miniſtry, without being able to produce, or indeed ever expecting to ſee one ſinner by their preaching converted from the evil and error of his ways, and brought to the knowledge of God's grace and faith in him! May it not well be ſaid to ſuch in the words of the great Head of the Church, "Wo unto you ye blind guides "how ſhall ye eſcape the damna- "tion of Hell."*

But are there not ſome noble exceptions from the general apoſtacy! aſſuredly, and they cannot be hid,

* Mat. xxiii. 33.

hid. They are too obnoxious by their fidelity not to bear the reproach of that croſs, which they dare lift up againſt the overflowings of ungodlineſs; but too few, and for the moſt part, too inferior in the world's regard, to be of much weight, in their eſtimation of men and things.

That the body of the people with ſuch examples, and ſuch teachers ſhould be corrupt, diſſipated, debauched, profane, intemperate, ignorant, yet infidel, is perfectly natural, and to be expected in the courſe of human events, as we ſee awfully verified. And the ſight is ſo glaring, ſo ſhocking, and ſo evidential

dential of the entire want, not only of Chriſtianity, but of all religion among us, that thoſe, who believe little and practice leſs, are ſtruck with it, and profeſs to ſet about attempting ſomething called reformation, but ſet about it by means, that muſt be as totally inadequate, as the cauſe and cure of our iniquities are to the reformers themſelves equally unknown. The wickedneſs of our populace will receive but little check from being taught to read, nor will vice and profaneneſs meet with any effectual reſtraint from a ſtring of great names in an advertiſement, or a conviction before a juſtice of the peace.

I know of no reformation that can ever be effectual, but what is produced by the knowledge of him who *hath called us to glory and virtue*; nor of any eſſential alteration for the better, that ever was, or ever can be wrought in the tempers and characters of men, but by that deſpiſed, exploded, contemptible and in human eſtimation fooliſh method, the preaching of the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

If human wiſdom improved by the higheſt proficiency in all branches of literature could have produced any effect, as there perhaps never was ſo great a meaſure of it in any age or nation as at preſent ſubſiſts

in our own, what ought we not to expect! If the ſcience of morals, delivered in the moſt elegant language could have made converts, how near to perfection ought we not to have advanced? How near it we have advanced, is a conſideration too awful almoſt, to make the ſubject of irony.

Might it not be worth the experiment, if we determined for a little while, "to know nothing elſe "but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified,"* if publicly and from houſe to houſe, the clergy ceaſed not "to preach and teach Jeſus Chriſt."† If this did not recommend them to favour,

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † Acts v. 42.

favour, it would at leaſt prove their fidelity.

Inſtead of proclamations againſt vice and profaneneſs, let the great men in power ſet but the examples of abſtaining themſelves from the immoralities they affect to condemn, and practiſing the virtues, which they profeſs to recommend; and not ſuppoſe that religion is only proper for the dregs of the people. Let their houſes become the daily temples of prayer, and praiſe—let their ſabbaths be ſpent in the courts of the Lord's houſe—let their tempers and conduct appear to be regulated by the authority of God's word, and under the guidance of

his ſpirit—let them be ſeen ſeeking a kingdom not of this world—let their affections and purſuits be fixed on that, which is eternal—let them avow that living and dying they have but one object and hope, "looking "unto Jeſus," "that they may be found of him in peace"—when the king and his miniſters, the biſhops and the clergy of all denominations, ſhall be found thus walking, we may confidently hope for the divine benediction in a happy change of our morals, and that there will be "added daily to the church ſuch as "ſhall be ſaved."*

As

* Acts ii. 42.

As things ſtand at preſent, if we are deciſively to judge by the divine record, it will admit of no diſpute, that even where the goſpel truths ſhine with the brighteſt luſtre, few comparatively follow it in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, and therefore are by it "condemned already."§

But if "judgment thus begins at the "houſe of God, what ſhall be the end "of thoſe, who neither know nor "obey the goſpel?"‡

The ſlighteſt ſurvey of the heathen world in times paſt, when the knowledge of the true God was nearly, if not altogether confined within the

§ John iii. 18. ‡ 1 Pet. iv. 17.

narrow bounds of Judea, and few even there found faithful—and the ſmall proportion which that part of it bears, where the true light yet ſhines, compared with the regions, which ſtill lie in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death,—open a field for awful reflection. If only "he that believeth can "be ſaved," and if "faith cometh by "hearing, and hearing by the word "of God,"† where that word is not ſent, and that faith never found, it ſeems impoſſible there ſhould be any ſalvation, unleſs it is attainable by ſome other means, than are revealed in the bible, or there be ſome other "name, given under Heaven "among men beſides that of Jeſus "Chriſt, whereby we can be ſaved."*

But

† Rom. x. 17. * Acts iv. 12.

But the Book of God expreſsly declares the contrary. The apoſtle addreſſing himſelf to the Gentiles, reminds them of the eſtate, in which they were before the goſpel ſhined upon them, "that ye were at that "time without Chriſt, having no "hope, and without God in the "world," Epheſians ii. 12. He affirms "that *they are loſt* to whom the "goſpel is *hid*, 2 Cor. iv. 3. "That "they who know not God and obey "not his goſpel, will be puniſhed with "everlaſting deſtruction," 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9. And "that *all* will be damn-"ed who believe not the truth," 2 Theſſ. ii. 12. Theſe and many other paſſages which might be produced ought to be deciſive, to thoſe

who profeſs to obey implicitly the teſtimony of God.

But there are many who pretend to be ſhocked at the idea, that all the poor heathens, the virtuous heathens, as they call them, ſhould periſh. We might reſt ſimply in replying that God indeed is not only ſovereign in all his diſpenſations, but will aſſuredly "be "alſo juſt when he judgeth." His judgment will be according to truth, and no man will periſh, but as the juſt reward of his ſin: however, certain it is, that "he that believeth not ſhall be "damned." And whoever arraigns the ſeverity of this deciſion, no miniſter of the Church of England dares to do it, on pain of being held accurſed by his

his own confeſſion; no member of the Church of England can do it without being convicted of the groſſeſt ignorance, or apoſtacy from the principles which he profeſſes to believe. The eighteenth article of religion is explicit and deciſive on this ſubject beyond the poſſibility of doubt or equivocation. "They alſo are to "to be had accurſed, that preſume "to ſay that every man ſhall be ſaved "by the law, or ſect which he pro-"feſſeth, ſo that he be diligent to "frame his life according to that "law, and the light of nature. For "holy ſcripture doth ſet out unto us "*only* the name of Jeſus Chriſt where-"by we can be ſaved."

Reluctant to ſubmit to the idea of heathen excluſion, ſome would fain ſuggeſt, that the merits of Chriſt, may ſome how extend to thoſe, who have never heard of, or known him. What to *all?* Then the heathen have the advantage over us. Or only to the *virtuous?* If they are virtuous: then his merits are ſuperfluous. After all are they to be ſaved by *their* virtue or *his?* What contradictions to truth muſt not they be involved in, who depart from the word and the teſtimony? Let the evidence be produced, where it appears that God ever promiſed, or deſigned, that any ſoul ſhould be ſaved by Chriſt, *without coming to the knowledge of the truth,*

truth:* and *leaſt of all the virtuous*; ſince the expreſs purpoſe of his coming was not for the righteous, but "to ſave ſinners."† If theſe *charitable* people, for as ſuch they honour themſelves, would conſider by what rule of ſcripture, or of ſcripture analogy, they thus preſume to extend the ſalvation—and how far—and to how many;—they would perhaps diſcover the danger of affecting "to be "wiſe above that which is written," and fear the preſumption of ſeeming to be more righteous than the Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, and more charitable than that God, whoſe name and nature is Love.

* 1 Tim. ii. 4. † 1 Tim. i. 15.

How much a nobler, and truly genuine exerciſe of charity would it be to endeavour the diffuſion of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt to the ends of the Earth, and to ſeek by every inſtituted means of divine appointment to bring the heathen lands out of darkneſs into his marvelous light. A plan for this purpoſe the author of the foregoing Eſſays has long drawn up, and earneſtly deſires to carry into execution, could he but ſucceed in ſo deſirable an event, he ſhould think he had not lived in vain.

But the reality of heathen virtue is a poſition highly queſtionable; and the veneration, abſurd, and ignorant, which

which ſome have liberally allowed the ſages of antiquity. Even the admired Socrates and Plato appear to have complied with the prevailing idolatry of their countrymen, and as to Cato, Cicero, Seneca, and others, who have written beſt on the ſubject of morals, ſo much of their hiſtory hath reached us, as makes it evident, that pride, vanity, intemperance, not to mention other abominations, marked even theſe diſtinguiſhed characters, and if we examine their writings; their principles—their rule of conduct—and the end which they propoſe to themſelves in all their actions—none of them appear to have the leaſt ſemblance to *chriſtian virtue.* * In-

* It is ſurprizing that thoſe who affect ſuch zeal for

Indeed the ſtate of morals among all heathen nations is, and muſt be, from the very nature of man in his preſent fallen ſtate, deplorable; and will aſſuredly juſtify God in his judgments on thoſe, "who having ſinned "without law, (without the revealed "law) ſhall alſo periſh without law."* They who preſume upon allowances for

God's love and mercy and ſay ſo many hard things of his procedures on the ſuppoſition of the excluſion of the heathen world from ſalvation, are not at leaſt as apprehenſive of making him a liar, and his word of none effect, when they dare ſo decidedly controvert his expreſs declarations. That the heathen world was univerſally idolatrous, appears from evidence indiſputable. Socrates, from whom Plato profeſſed to learn his opinions and ſanctions them with his name, however abſurd he might judge the polytheiſm of his countrymen, orders a ſacrifice to Æſculapius when dying. All the ſages of antiquity ſubmitted to the eſtabliſhed idolatry, nay thoſe who treated their

* Rom. ii. 12.

for human ignorance and infirmity, had need ſearch diligently the Book of God, to ſee, if they can diſcover any trace of ſuch a ſuggeſtion. Aggravations of ſin indeed there may be ariſing from advantages neglected, or abuſed, but the one wages for ſin, univerſally denounced, is eternal death.† That ſin and death were in the

gods themſelves, with contempt and ridicule complied. I appeal to the writings of thoſe heathens eſteemed the wiſeſt, and moſt virtuous. If therefore idolatry be affirmed repeatedly, in the moſt preciſe terms, in the Bible, to be an excluſion from the kingdom of God, I beg to know on what ground of ſcriptural hope, there can be preſumed a poſſibility of ſalvation for idolaters. It is not a matter of doubt, or left undetermined, or that can come into controverſy when it is ſaid, they who do ſuch things *ſhall not* inherit the kingdom of God. And if God ſays "*ſhall not*," dare a worm of Earth affirm, they "*ſhall?*"

† Rom. vi. 23.

the world, before the giving of the law on Sinai is evident, "but "where no law is there is no tranſ- "greſſion."‡ The obligations reſulting from the very nature of the relation in which he ſtands towards his Maker, will leave every man without excuſe. To the natural man, who receiveth not the things which be of the Spirit of God, theſe may appear *hard ſayings:* but if they are the true ſayings of God and clearly and impartially derived from his word, let thoſe find fault, who dare reſiſt his will, as ſovereign, and arraign at the bar of their judgment, the moſt High and the moſt Holy,

Many

‡ Rom. vi. 15.

Many indeed in every age have thus preſumed to impeach the divine juſtice, becauſe "he hath mercy on "whom he will have mercy, and "whom he will he hardeneth."* But no man ever really believed the account of the fall of man and its conſequences, as recorded in the Bible, and I may add, as affirmed in the ninth article of our church, that can conſiſtently diſpute the righteouſneſs of God inflicting puniſhment on any child of Adam, as a child of wrath. It is truly matter of eternal admiration and gratitude that there is a choſen generation, "who ſhall "be to the praiſe of the glory of his "grace."

* Rom. ix. 18,

"grace." And if they are few, may we be found of that number! "giv-
"ing all diligence to make our call-
"ing and election ſure."†

† 2 Pet. i. 10.

ESSAY IX.

ON GOSPEL SIMPLICITY.

THE truth, as it is in Jeſus muſt carry its own demonſtration to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God. As "it ſtandeth not in the "wiſdom of man,"* it derives none of its efficacy from merely human argumentation. "The excellency of "the power is of God, and not of "us;"† and when miniſtered in native ſimplicity, the goſpel never fails

* 1 Cor. il. 5. † 1 Cor. iv. 7.

fails to produce the happieſt conſequences on the hearts of the redeemed.

The goſpel requires no depth of genius, no mathematical acuteneſs, or metaphyſical reaſoning in order to be underſtood; deſigned to be preached to the poor, the unlettered, and the ignorant, it declares a few plain facts with their evidence, level to the meaneſt capacity, and points out their import as connected with our holineſs and happineſs; "The wayfaring man though a fool "need not err therein."* It is with the diſpoſition and implicit ſubmiſſion of an infant, that the kingdom of God muſt be received.†

The

* Iſa. xxxv. 9. † Luke xviii. 17.

The pride of philoſophy, and the ſelf-ſufficiency of Phariſaiſm, cannot indeed brook this ſimplicity, nor ſubmit to the humiliating repreſentations of the goſpel. As the preaching of the croſs was of old, "to "the Jews a ſtumbling block, and "to the Greeks fooliſhneſs,"* ſo muſt it ſtill appear a moſt contemptible doctrine, to every man, who fancies himſelf high exalted on the pedeſtal of human excellence, and endued with allſufficient innate, rational, and moral powers. Preferring their own reaſonings on the fitneſs, beauty, and excellence of virtue, and pleaſed with ſuppoſed deductions, from a *religion* they call *natural*, the wiſe create a ſyſtem of theology, of more conſummate

* 1 Cor. i. 23.

conſummate rationality, than "the "ſimplicity which is in Chriſt."* If therefore they happen by education to grow up in the profeſſion of the goſpel; all myſteries muſt be exploded, or regarded with a jealous eye, and every doctrine, which exceeds the bounds of their vaſt comprehenſion, and hath no other argument to demonſtrate its truth, but "thus and thus ſaith the Lord," muſt be rejected as abſurd, or compelled to undergo the torture and amputation of philoſophical ſcrutiny, 'till revelation can be reconciled, to their *reaſonable views of Chriſtianity.*

Offended at the idea of the triune God, and Jehovah incarnate, as incompatible

* 2 Cor. xi. 3.

compatible with their notions of the divine Eſſence, theſe rational divines have formed a *Supreme Being* of their own, inſtead of the unphiloſophical Elohim of the ſcriptures.

As his foreknowledge, predeſtination, and grace, muſt quite overturn that diſpoſition of things, which the will and wiſdom of man hath eſtabliſhed as fit and conſiſtent, theſe terms are to be explained, to mean any thing, except what their plain etymology ſignifies.

The corruption of the human nature, with all its degrading conſequences, cannot poſſibly be admitted in the full extent of ſcripture language,

guage, as being utterly contradictory to their notions of the goodneſs of God and totally ſubverting the dignity and freedom of man.

Juſtification, by faith alone, in the righteouſneſs of another, would ſap, in their idea, the very foundations of moral obligation; deſtroy all diſtinction of character among men; and place the erranteſt ſcoundrel reſpecting the divine favour on a footing with the moſt exalted of our ſpecies, the Titus's, the Trajan's, and the Antonines of their age. It muſt therefore be ever guarded with a ſaving clauſe, in behalf of human virtue and piety, leaſt emboldened by the great and precious

precious promiſes, any very wicked, and bad perſons might incautiouſly be led to imagine that God will really, freely, by his grace (δωρεαν κατα χαριν) "juſtify the ungodly, who believeth "in Jeſus,"* and be tempted to expect, ſinners as they are, and "yet "ſinners" that they can be conſtituted, and accepted as, righteous before a holy God, merely by the imputation of his finiſhed work on the croſs.‡ An idea in their view as evidently abſurd, as that "my wounds "could be healed by another's "ſtripes."†

* Rom. iii. 24.—Rom. iv. 4, 5.
‡ Rom. v. 19. † 1 Pet. ii. 24.

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* Rom. iii. 24.—Rom. iv. 4, 5.
‡ Rom. v. 19. † 1 Pet. ii. 24.

All pretenſions to *divine communication* and gifts and graces of the Holy Ghoſt, as alone productive of illumination of the underſtanding, or purity of heart, muſt on the very face of them be enthuſiaſtic, and contemptible. And to inſinuate that "ſuch is the condition of man after the fall, that he cannot turn "and prepare himſelf by his own "natural ſtrength, and good works, "to faith, and calling upon God, "without the grace of God preventing him that he may have a "good will, and working with him "when he hath that good will,"* this would ſuppoſe us mere machines; ſubvert utterly the freedom

* Article x.

of the human will; deprive the actions of men of all distinctive excellence, and destroy the very essence of virtue. The utmost therefore, that being born of God*—of the Spirit†—being partakers of the Holy Ghost‡—his shining into our hearts§—being renewed in the spirit of our minds‖—walking in the comforts of the Holy Ghost§§—being led by the spirit of God‖‖—this spirit dwelling in us††—with a variety of other scriptures, too tedious here to mention—the utmost that these can rationally be admitted to mean, can only be some favorable interpretations of human frailty,

* John i. 13. † John iii. 5. ‡ Heb. vi. 4.
§ 2 Cor. iv. 6. ‖ Eph. iv. 23. §§ Acts ix. 31.
‖‖ Rom. viii. 4. †† Rom. viii. 11.

or ſome aſſiſtances granted to our pious endeavours, in order to make the good, better.

If we take the bleſſed book of God, and compare it with theſe deluting comments of rational divines, it is hardly poſſible not to perceive throughout, the evident oppoſition of the Chriſtian faith to theſe doctrines of men, and the abſurdity of the attempt, to reconcile the faith of God's elect, with the reaſonings of philoſophy. It is really a very ingenious contrivance, to make the offence of the croſs to ceaſe, by ſo clear a demonſtration of the reaſonableneſs, of their expoſition of the chriſtian doctrine, as muſt prove that

that there is nothing at all, in the doctrine of the croſs offenſive.

Thus have theſe theological alchymiſts decompoſed all the bleſſed principles of the goſpel and robbed them of their divine efficacy. The fire of their genius and profound erudition, hath evaporated every powerful and penetrating particle from the book of God, and hath left in the retort, a mere caput mortuum, no more like vital Chriſtianity, than the reſiduary coal, reſembles the active, ſtimulating, and volatile eſſence.

But it is not merely by the vapid comments of this philoſophical

theology, that the truth is debaſed and its ſpirit loſt in Deiſm and heathen ethics. The wounds it receives in the houſe of its friends are equally grievous, and leſs ſuſpected, where the cloak of Chriſtian zeal covers the concealed dagger.

Many affect to hold and inculcate the bleſſed and characteriſtic doctrines of the goſpel; they admit the divine ſovereignty; ſpeak of the unſearchable riches of grace; profeſs their hope as derived alone from the righteouſneſs of the Son of God, and acknowledge that they can only be kept by the power of God, thro' faith unto ſalvation. *But* they fence every one of theſe diſtinguiſhing

tinguiſhing truths, with ſo many guards; and expreſs ſuch fearful apprehenſions; leaſt they ſhould be abuſed and perverted; as if without their multiplied cautions, true as they own the doctrines, this was much to be apprehended, and that there really was at the bottom, ſome tendency in the doctrines themſelves, leading thereunto; adding withal, ſuch a ſeeming zeal for holineſs; and jealous inſinuations, that the ſeldomer and leſs freely, fully, diſtinctly we ſpeak of theſe deep things of God the better; as if like Eleuſinian myſteries, they were only to be whiſpered in ſecret to the initiated.

Such jealouſy of the influence of doctrines, which they profeſs to believe, renders it ſhrewdly ſuſpicious, that they are themſelves, but almoſt perſuaded; and looks more like handling the word of God deceitfully, than in ſimplicity, *manifeſting the truth to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.** There have been in the church from the beginning, "falſe "apoſtles, deceitful workers, tranſ-"forming themſelves into the apoſ-"tles of Chriſt," and under the guiſe of peculiar ſanctity, and jealouſy for the law, many imbibe from them a Galatian ſpirit, and turn aſide unto *another goſpel which we have not accepted.*†

"The

* 2 Cor. iv. 2. † 2 Cor. xi. 4.

"The truth as it is in Jeſus," the more clearly it is known, and the more cordially it is embraced, muſt in every heart produce its bleſſed fruits. Do we at any time ſee, or think we ſee, the profeſſion of goſpel grace diſhonoured by the corrupt practices of an unrenewed heart? we may reſt aſſured, this flows not from the abuſe of the truth, but from the want of it, from error, ignorance, and unbelief.

"The elect, according to the fore-
"knowledge of God, are led, thro'
"ſanctification of the Spirit, unto
"obedience.*"

* 1 Pet. i. 2.

God's choice from the beginning, of the redeemed unto ſalvation, does not ſuperſede the means, which lead thereunto, but includes them. "They "are created in Chriſt Jeſus, unto "good works, God having before "ordained, that we ſhould walk in "them."*

"The grace of God, which bring-"eth the ſalvation," eſſentially, internally, "teacheth us to deny ungod-"lineſs and worldly luſts."†

"When God juſtifieth the ungod-"ly that believeth in Jeſus, the "faith of God's elect worketh by "love,"§ the conſtraining power of which,

* Eph. ii. 10. † Tit. ii. 12. § Gal. v. 6.

which, cannot but be mightily influential, wherever it is real.

The holy jealouſy over ourſelves, and conſtant conflict maintained againſt ſin and ſelf; the diſpoſition to "work out our own ſalvation "with fear and trembling," ſpring wholly from, and become only effectual thro' him, "who worketh in "us, to will and to do of his good "pleaſure."*

The aſſurance that "he will never "leave nor forſake us,"§ and "that "none ſhall ever pluck us out of "his hands, or ſeparate us from his "love;"† ſo far from engendering

* Philip. ii. 13. § Heb. xiii. 5. † Rom. viii. 36.

careleſſneſs, or tending to falſe ſecurity, is the greateſt encouragement to "run, not as uncertainly, and "to fight not as thoſe who beat the "air."* It is becauſe he hath put "his fear into our hearts, that we "ſhall not depart from him."§

The time would fail me to point out all the glorious truths of God, with their connections; they are ſo multiplied and intimately interwoven in the bleſſed book, that the doctrines of grace can never be truly embraced, without experiencing the happy influence, and effects attending them. It is *the truth*, and that alone which can *make us free*.‡ Dare any

* 1 Cor. ix. 26. § Jer. xxxii. 40. ‡ John vii. 32.

any man challenge goſpel liberty, whilſt he remains the willing ſlave of corruption, we know that "he is a "liar and doth not the truth."* His views of goſpel grace muſt be perverted; for "no lie is of the truth."†

By whom can the evil and danger of ſin be ſo deeply felt, as by thoſe, who know, how much it coſt to redeem? What incitement can there be to righteouſneſs, and true holineſs, ſo powerful, as the conſtant view of a crucified Jeſus? Can I love him the leſs, becauſe my obligations to him commenced "before the foundation "of the world?"‡ Shall I ſerve him the

* 1 John i. 6. † 1 John ii. 21.
‡ Eph. i. 4.

the more negligently, becauſe I feel "beneath me are the everlaſting "arms?"† Or ſhall I be the more enfeebled, or diſheartened to ſtrive againſt temptation, becauſe "kept by "the power of God unto ſalvation?"‡‡ Verily, every truth of the divine word, diſplayed in all its comely proportions, hath the moſt direct and powerful tendency, "to make the "man of God perfect, thoroughly "furniſhed unto all good works."§

It is not by concealment,—by partial views,—by carefully unveiling now and then a feature of truth; by inſinuations, that the whole counſel of

† Deutero. xxxiii. 27. ‡‡ 1 Pet. i. 5.
§ 2 Tim. iii. 17.

of God from everlaſting to everlaſting, need not be dwelt upon—by daring to ſuggeſt, that any part of the revelation of God, may lead to carnal ſecurity, or unworthy walking—It is not thus, that real purity of heart and life can be promoted. Men may by ſuch affected cautions grow up into an opinion of their own ſpiritual wiſdom, and ſuperior ſanctity, but, by ſuch deceitfully handling "of "the word of God," will never "grow up into him in all things, who "is the head, even Chriſt."*

When the glorious peculiarities of the goſpel are promulged openly, freely, fully—diſplayed in all their beauteous

* Eph. iv. 15.

beauteous relations—held forth in their ſtrongeſt colours to the conſcience—When a ſure unſhaken and uniform foundation is laid, for abiding confidence towards God; and the relief provided for ſinners, as ſuch, is ſimply adminiſtered; no bad conſequences need be feared, every good one may be expected. God's truth, faithfully repreſented, will, to the end of time, "be the power of God "unto ſalvation to every one that be-"lieveth"*—But there will be hypocrites and ſelf-deceivers—Admitted—becauſe they ſtumble at the "word, be-"ing diſobedient, (απειθουντες) where-"unto alſo they were appointed."

* Rom. i. 16.

ESSAY X.

ON ENTHUSIASM.

THERE is not a term in the Engliſh language, which hath been more perverted; leſs underſtood; and oftener employed to ſerve the purpoſes of infidelity, and irreligion, than *Enthuſiaſm*.

Tho' religion itſelf is profeſſedly treated with reſpect as an abſtract idea,

idea, no ſooner is its nature, and influence brought under conſideration, than every meaſure of it, which exceeds our own ſtandard, is regarded as being righteous over much; and whenever real godlineſs appears to make any progreſs, Enthuſiaſm, is the cry, and riſes up as a ſpectre to intimidate and deter from ſo dangerous an intruder. The conſequence hath been that in order to keep at as great a diſtance as poſſible, from ſo dreadful an evil, after exploding the power of godlineſs, we have very nearly got rid of the form, and to exculpate ourſelves from all religious Enthuſiaſm, have taken care to have no religion at all,

all; and then we can be no longer ſuſpected.

The criterion of vital Chriſtianity, is ſtrongly marked in the ſcriptures of truth, "If ſo be the ſpirit "of God dwelleth in you."* To be deſtitute of his preſence and abode, is the infallible Evidence of his rejection of us, "if any man hath not "the Spirit of Chriſt he is none of "his;" but hereby we know, that "he abideth in us, by his Spirit, "which he hath given us."†

Enthuſiaſm, in its etymology, ſimply conveys to us this idea, *God in us.* But as impoſture uſually affects the garb of

* Rom. viii. 9. † John iii. 24.

of truth, this doctrine has been grievouſly perverted; and many have affected high pretences to a divine afflatus, to ſupernatural impreſſions, to viſions and revelations, which have had no ſubſiſtence but in a diſordered imagination, or "the cunning "craftineſs whereby they lie in wait "to deceive."* Hence the word Enthuſiaſm is now generally uſed in a bad ſenſe: and inſtead of diſtinguiſhing reality from affectation, or deluſion, thoſe who ſtrive to undermine the foundations of true Chriſtianity, have endeavoured to bring all divine agency into diſrepute, and to involve the influences of God's Spirit, in the ſame cenſure and reproach with the pretences

* Eph. iv. 14.

pretences of the crafty, or the dreams of fanatics.

To guard againſt the deluſions of folly and falſehood, and eſtabliſh "the "doctrine which is according to godli-"neſs;"‡ I ſhall beg a candid hearing on the ſubject; as it is of the laſt importance to diſcriminate between truth and error: leaſt under the notion of reſcuing religion from Enthuſiaſm, we ſhould diveſt it of all its divine power and energy.

God the Holy Ghoſt, the third perſon in the ever bleſſed Jehovah, is the object of our faith. His divine agency and effectual operations on our

‡ 1 Tim. vi. 3.

our ſpirits may be traced under three diſtinguiſhed heads:

I. As enlightening our underſtanding;

II. As influencing our conſcience and conduct.

III. As communicating to us conſolations amidſt the trials and afflictions with which we are exerciſed in this vale of our pilgrimage.

I. God the Spirit enlightens the minds of the redeemed, with the bright beams of his truth. Both the light of revelation itſelf, and the faculty of viſion are his gift. The human mind is darkneſs, and muſt continue therein, 'till he is pleaſed "to

"ſhine

"ſhine into our hearts,"† and "open "our underſtanding that we may un- "derſtand the ſcriptures."§

The wiſeſt of men are as incapable of diſcovering the myſtery of godli- neſs, as the moſt unlearned, without this divine Interpreter. Leaning to their own underſtanding, and proudly aſſuming reaſon as their only guide, the bible is to them "a book ſealed "and a goſpel hid." "The world by "wiſdom knew not God."‡ The higheſt attainments in literature, or critical acumen, never were effectual to open the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge contained in the ſcriptures of

† 2 Cor. iv. 6 § Luke xxiv. 45.
‡ 1 Cor. i. 21.

of truth. "The things of the Spirit "must be ſpiritually diſcerned."§ That we muſt "all be taught of "God"† is the revolting truth, before which the pride of human wiſdom refuſes to bow down: hence "not many wiſe men after the fleſh "are called."*

Nay did we embrace the doctrine of truth, by the teachings of men only, they would be mere opinions, and no powerful principles of action or comfort. It would be only as the light ſhining in darkneſs, which the darkneſs never comprehends. To learn the articles of the Chriſtian faith is

§ 1 Cor. ii. 14. † Iſai. liv. 13.
* 1 Cor. i. 26.

is eaſy; and ſcientifically to contend for them poſſible, but, "no man can "ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by "the Holy Ghoſt."‖ The real ſaving knowledge of him, muſt be a divine communication, revealed to us by that Spirit, who in the œconomy of our ſalvation is ſent to take "the "things of Chriſt and ſhew them un-"to us."† Without whoſe illumination we know nothing as we ought to know, all other knowledge being merely "in word and in tongue, this "in power and in the Holy Ghoſt, "and in much aſſurance,"* attended with "an evidence and ſubſiſtence, "(ελεγχος)"§ a demonſtration of truth,

 which

‖ 1 Cor. xii. 3.
† John xvi. 15.
* 1 Theſſ. i. 5.
§ Heb. xi. 1.

which " faith of the operation of God" alone communicates. Enthuſiaſtic jargon cries one! " Doth not this " man ſpeak parables ?"‡ Perhaps to you he doth, yet he only uſes the expreſſions, which you a thouſand times have repeated, and therefore whatever he is, out of your own mouth are you condemned; for how often have you uttered, I will not ſay, prayed,

Lighten our darkneſs we beſeech thee, O Lord!—Caſt thy bright beams of light upon thy church!—Cleanſe the thoughts of our hearts by the inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit!—And as thou didſt teach the hearts of thy faithful people by ſending to them

the

‡ Ezek. xx. 49.

the light of thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the ſame Spirit to have a right judgment in all things! that by thy holy inſpiration we may think thoſe things that be good.§——I might multiply quotations. If theſe opinions and expreſſions are deemed enthuſiaſtic, they include a goodly company in the cenſure, of which without acknowledging himſelf a hypocrite and condemned by his own prayers, no member of the Church of England can be aſhamed. Though it muſt be owned with grief that in every church profeſſing Chriſtianity, too many are to be found, who have ſcarcely conſidered "if there be any "Holy Ghoſt,"‡ and if they are to

§ Liturgy paſſim. ‡ Act, xix. 2.

be decided by any experience of light or teaching by him communicated to them, they muſt conclude equally againſt his being and operations.

II. Divine power and influence muſt be communicated to our hearts in order to all holy walking with God, and to enable us to perform any acceptable ſervice. I hear much of the innate love of virtue, the moral ſenſe, the fine feelings, and the nice honour of imaginary beings. I look round, and ſee "the whole world lying in wickedneſs."§ Nor indeed according to our view of things can it be otherwiſe. "For it is not in man

"that

§ 1 John v. 19.

"that walketh to direct his ſteps "aright."† "The dead in treſpaſſes "and ſins muſt be quickened before "they can poſſibly walk or pleaſe "God." ".Marvel not therefore, "ſaith the Great Prophet, marvel not "that I ſaid unto you ye muſt be "born again, that which is born of the "fleſh is fleſh, and that which is born "of the Spirit is ſpirit."‡ "So then "they that are in the fleſh cannot "pleaſe God."§

Having no ability therefore of ourſelves to help ourſelves, we muſt be indebted to the grace which bringeth ſalvation, and receive power from above, "ſtrengthened with might, by God's

† John iii. 7. § Rom. vi. 8.

" Spirit in the inner man."* Indeed the whole of the Chriſtian ſcheme as revealed in the bible leads us to ſeek " help where it is laid on One " mighty to ſave."† That we may " receive, not the ſpirit which is of " the world, but the Spirit which is " of God,"‡ " who helpeth our infir- " mities," and whoſe " ſtrength is " made perfect in weakneſs." If there be a chriſtian grace to be exerciſed it is " the fruit of the Spirit;"§ if there be a duty to be performed it muſt be " in the Holy Ghoſt:"‖ and if " a good man's goings are directed " aright and his way acceptable," it is

* Eph. iii. 16. † Pſalm lxxxix. 19.
‡ 1 Cor. ii. 12. § Gal. v. 22. ‖ Jude 20.
1 Cor. xiv. 15.

is becauſe the Lord the Spirit ordereth them.* Indeed it is among the ſtrong proofs of the aſtoniſhing blindneſs of the human heart, that any perſon capable of reading the book of God, ſhould ever doubt reſpecting a truth, with which every page is replete, and which every ſacred penman uniformly inculcates.

Hence prayer becomes a neceſſary, and reaſonable ſervice. Not the compliment of formality, but the real addreſs of the heart to God, "who "heareth prayer," and hath promiſed to give his Holy "Spirit to thoſe "who aſk him."§ The all-ſufficient grace is a divine communication, "I

* Pſalm xxxvii. 23 § Luke xi. 13.

" live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in " me."* " We dwell in him and he " in us by the Spirit which he hath " given us."‡ Our works pleaſe God, when thus begun, continued, and ended in him.—So we are again returned to *God in us*, or Enthuſiaſm; and how to avoid it, I ſee not, unleſs by making another Bible, and a new Book of Common Prayer, for in the old one we muſt pray continually—" O Thou, from whom all holy " deſires, all good counſels, and all " juſt works do proceed, ſend thy " Holy Ghoſt, and pour into our " hearts that moſt excellent gift of " love the very bond of peace, and " of all virtues:—that we who cannot " do

* Gal. ii. 20. ‡ 1 John iv. 13.

"do any good thing without thee,
"may by the help of thy grace pleaſe
"thee both in will and deed!—Grant
"that thy Holy Spirit may prevent
"and follow us; and in all things di-
"rect and rule our hearts—that by
"his inſpiration we may think thoſe
"things that be good, and by his
"merciful guiding perform the ſame,
"ſend us thy Holy Ghoſt to comfort
"us, and exalt us to the ſame place
"whither our Saviour Chriſt is gone
"before. O God the Holy Ghoſt
"have mercy upon us."*

Dares any man exclaim againſt theſe expreſſions as enthuſiaſtical! I can only ſay, they are not mine,

* Liturgy paſſim.

though I adopt them. I have tranſcribed them from a book which bears ſome authority in the nation, and therefore am at leaſt not ſingular in thus believing, ſpeaking, and praying. But

III. Divine comfort muſt be received from the Holy Ghoſt. This is confeſſedly a miſerable world: univerſal experience proves it full of ſin and ſorrow, "They who are in this "tabernacle groan being burdened."* I mean not to paſs in review all the ſcenes "of trouble to which man is "born as the ſparks fly upwards;" they would be more than I am able to expreſs, and if in this life only we had

* 2 Cor. v. 4.

had hope we muſt be wretched beings indeed. The great ſupports of a Chriſtian's ſpirit are the conſolations of God, "thoſe conſolations which "abound, as the tribulations a-"bound,"* with which we are called to conflict. "I will not leave you com-"fortleſs," ſaid our adorable Maſter, "I will ſend you another comforter, "who ſhall abide with you forever, "even the Spirit of truth, whom the "world cannot receive becauſe it "ſeeth him not neither knoweth him, "but ye know him, for he dwelleth "with you, and ſhall be in you."† The word of truth through his application is received with joy in the Holy Ghoſt and "in the midſt of

 "every

* 2 Cor. i. 5. † John xiv. 16, 17.

" every ſorrow which afflicts us, his " comforts refreſh our ſouls."

This is an eſſential part of the Chriſtian ſyſtem. The religion of the Son of God, is not that cold inſenſible form, which ſome ſuppoſe, but the happy enjoyment of divine favour, where the heart " ſealed " with the Holy Spirit of pro- " miſe,"* unto the day of redemption, is " filled with joy and peace in " believing."‖

Some may indeed ſcoffing ſay, I have no notion of theſe inward feelings, and enthuſiaſtic fancies. I can only reply, Is every inward feeling enthuſiaſtic,

* Eph. i. 13. ‖ Rom. xv. 13.

enthuſiaſtic, and all internal, heart-felt, ſpiritual joy, fanciful? I am afraid religion without feeling, is but a painted ſun, and that they have but "a name to live and are dead," who never felt "their ſpirit rejoicing "in God our Saviour,"* and "walk-"ing in the comfort of the Holy "Ghoſt.'‖

I am ſure the prayers, which I have from infancy been accuſtomed to uſe, have taught me to aſk and expect this divine conſolation, and have directed me to expreſs my thankfulneſs for it. But the prayer muſt be abſurd in itſelf, if no ſuch conſolation is to be expected,

* Luke i. 47. ‖ Acts ix. 31.

expected, and the bleſſing a lie if no ſuch comfort hath been enjoyed.

" God! who didſt teach the hearts " of thy people by ſending to them " the light of thy Holy Spirit, grant " us by the ſame Spirit to have a right " judgment in all things, and *evermore* " *to rejoice in his holy comfort!* We be- " ſeech thee leave us not comfort- " leſs, but ſend to us the Holy Ghoſt " to comfort us! O make thy choſen " people joyful!"

It is ſaid indeed, theſe are anti quated doctrines, and in the preſent more improved ſtate of philoſophic inveſtigation, and learning, are ex- ploded for more rational ideas. It may

may be ſo, but of this I am ſure, that very lately during the heavieſt calamity under which this nation hath groaned, when with fervent prayer we were enjoined to ſeek the King of Kings in behalf of THE FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE, we were taught to invocate "the Holy Spirit, for "thoſe conſolations which He only "can beſtow."† If conſolations, they muſt be felt and experienced—if the Holy Spirit only can beſtow them, then we acknowledge his godhead and glory, and the ſpeciality of his grace.

Nor can theſe doctrines by any man of common ſenſe and candor be called antiquated, when to this day, no

† See Prayer for his Majeſty's recovery.

no perſon can be admitted to miniſter in holy things with us, but on his ſolemn declaration that he is "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt."* Nor is this merely the language of our confeſſions, and of our prayers; but what is too commonly reputed the height of Enthuſiaſm, we are called upon not only to pray, but to ſing in the ſame ſtrain, and with expreſſions, if poſſible, ſtronger than thoſe contained in our prayers.

I have inſerted the two following hymns from our Ordination Service, becauſe I verily believe a multitude of

* See Ordination Service.

of perſons have never underſtood that any ſuch were in the prayer book.

I.

COME Holy Ghoſt, our ſouls inſpire,
And lighten with celeſtial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who doſt thy ſev'nfold gifts impart:
Thy bleſſed Unction from above,
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dulneſs of our blinded ſight:
Anoint and cheer our ſoiled face
With the abundance of thy Grace:
Keep far our foes, give peace at home;
Where thou art Guide no ill can come.
Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And thee, of both to be but one:
That through the ages all along,
This may be our endleſs ſong:
Praiſe to thy eternal merit.
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

II.

COME, Holy Ghoſt, eternal God,
Proceeding from above,
Both from the Father and the Son,
The God of peace and love;

Viſit

Viſit our minds, into our hearts
  Thy heav'nly grace inſpire;
That truth and godlineſs we may
  Purſue with full deſire.

Thou art the very Comforter
  In grief and all diſtreſs;
The heav'nly gift of God moſt High;
  No tongue can it expreſs;

The fountain and the living ſpring
  Of joy celeſtial;
The fire ſo bright, the love ſo ſweet,
  The Unction ſpiritual.

Thou in thy gifts art manifold,
  By them Chriſt's Church doth ſtand:
In faithful hearts thou writ'ſt thy law,
  The finger of God's hand.

According to thy promiſe, Lord,
  Thou giveſt ſpeech with grace;
That through thy help God's praiſes may
  Reſound in ev'ry place.

O Holy Ghoſt, into our minds
  Send down thy heav'nly light;
Kindle our hearts with fervent zeal,
  To ſerve God day and night:

Our weakneſs ſtrengthen and confirm,
  (For, Lord, thou know'ſt us frail)

That neither devil, world, nor fleſh
  Againſt us may prevail.

Put back our en'mies far from us,
  And help us to obtain
Peace in our hearts with God and Man,
  (The beſt, the trueſt gain:)

And grant that thou being, O Lord,
  Our leader and our guide,
We may eſcape the ſnares of ſin,
  And never from thee ſlide.

Such meaſures of thy pow'rful grace
  Grant, Lord, to us, we pray;
That thou may'ſt be our Comforter
  At the laſt dreadful day.

Of ſtrife and of diſſention
  Diſſolve, O Lord, the bands,
And knit the knots of peace and love
  Throughout all Chriſtian lands.

Grant us the grace that we may know
  The Father of all might,
That we of his beloved Son,
  May gain the bleſſed ſight;

And that we may with perfect faith
  Ever acknowledge thee,
The Spirit of Father, and of Son,
  One God in Perſons-three.

To God the Father laud and praiſe,
And to his bleſſed Son,
And to the Holy Spirit of grace,
Co-equal Three in One.

And pray we, that our only Lord
Would pleaſe his Spirit to ſend
On all that ſhall profeſs his name,
From hence to the world's end. Amen.

Hymn ſinging hath long received a particular mark of reprobation, and ſtands convicted of Enthuſiaſm. I ſhall forbear to make any obſervations on thoſe produced, and ſhall only ſay, that I know of no hymns, ſung in any congregation, containing ſtronger language, and more characteriſtic of what the world, called Chriſtian, is pleaſed to deſpiſe and ridicule.

The

The archbiſhops, and all the biſhops themſelves, thus ſing and pray, and if this be enthuſiaſtic, they are I preſume well able to vindicate themſelves, and need not my feeble pen as their advocate.

But ſome perſons will ſtill impudently affirm, read the works, hear the ſermons, aſk the opinions, of all whom you ſo confidently challenge as your aſſociates in the church, will you find a page, a paſſage countenancing the opinions, for which you contend? Did you ever hear the neceſſity of divine teaching and inſpiration by them inculcated? Will you pretend that they inſiſt upon the ſpecial influence of the Holy Ghoſt to produce every good

good thought, word, and work? So far from this being the general uniform tenour of their diſcourſes, ſhew me a ſingle expreſſion in any ſermon or treatiſe, among the moſt eſteemed modern divines, in which any ſpiritual conſolation from the Holy Ghoſt is ſpoken of, as felt, and to be experienced? Do they not explode the idea, and is not the whole ſtrain of their teaching and doctrine, the very reverſe of what you inſinuate? Are they not full of neceſſary cautions againſt enthuſiaſts and fanatics? and do they not deciſively mark, thoſe, whom they conſider as ſuch, even as many as believe in and pray for, expect, and profeſs to receive illumination,

tion, influence, and comfort from the Holy Ghoſt.

I am now, I own reduced to a dilemma: for ſhould I affirm theſe ſuggeſtions are falſe, I ſhall be buried under ſermons, pamphlets, volumes, octavos, quartos, folios, innumerable. But if I admit the charge to be true, then muſt I ſtamp ſuch a reproach of hypocriſy, falſehood, contradiction, and blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, on a body ſo highly reſpectable, as would expoſe me to ſevere cenſure.

I preſume therefore, I had better refer the matter to every man of candor and uprightneſs to conſider the queſtion,

queſtion and the arguments produced, and then to judge for himſelf, leaving the admired moderns, and rational divines to vindicate themſelves from any ſuppoſed inconſiſtencies, for indeed I am not equal to the taſk, being myſelf only a poor deſpiſed believer "in God the Holy Ghoſt, who ſanctifieth me and all the elect people of "God."*

* See Catechiſm.

ESSAY XI.

ON TOLERATION.

PERSECUTION for conſcience ſake, is as contradictory to common ſenſe, as diametrically oppoſite to every doctrine, precept, and practice, inculcated in the goſpel.

The conſcience acknowledges but One Lawgiver, whoever beſides preſumes to arrogate authority over it, uſurps the throne of the Moſt

High. Whether a man's conſcience be well informed, or miſtaken, to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. His opinions muſt, and ought to be according to his convictions. The truths of God would be no truths to him, who received them as impoſed by authority, and not as the reſult of evidence. 'Till they are attended with ſuch convincing evidence to the mind, profeſſion of them is but hypocriſy: and therefore all attempts to compel men to a conformity with our religious ſentiments, whilſt they remain deſtitute of ſuch conviction, is only to add one more to the number of their crimes.

Whe

When the goſpel of our God and Saviour was firſt promulged, the divine evidence attending it, carried ſuch demonſtration of its truth to the conſciences of men, as bore down all oppoſition, and triumphed over, not only the ſuperſtitions of Paganiſm, but the prejudices of the Jews. Nor was the goſpel indebted for this efficacy, to the miracles that atteſted its divine Original, but to the mighty power, which accompanied it to the heart. By the ſame power the Goſpel hath continued to maintain its influence in the world, and to the end of time muſt ſubſiſt alone, on the foundation of its own intrinſic excellence, and divine energy.

Whenever the external profeſſion of Chriſtianity becomes univerſal or general in any country, they, in whoſe hands the governing power is lodged, may, and ought to make ſome proviſion for an evangelical miniſtry. It is not poſſible to embrace the goſpel with any conſiſtence, as a reality, and not appear ſolicitous that its influence ſhould be univerſally known and felt: whether we conſider its importance, as extending to the eternal concerns of mankind; or regard merely its happy effects on ſociety; as inculcating thoſe principles of charity, and obedience, which tend to form the beſt ſubjects, and to enſure their peaceableneſs and fidelity, not only for "wrath, but alſo

"for

"for conſcience ſake." A religious eſtabliſhment is natural in a country profeſſing godlineſs. And ſuch it ought to be, as correſponds with the firſt principles, which it is deſigned to propagate.

Let it not be ſuppoſed however that the religion of the Son of God, as revealed in the goſpel, ever was or humanly ſpeaking ever can be, the religion of any people, or nation under the ſun, as a body. Some wiſe and good men may indeed ſo far have prevailed, as to gain the ſanction of public authority, to the great truths drawn from the ſacred records, but the pervading genius of the goſpel correſponds not with the kingdoms of

this world. Even where it becomes the national religion, the many re-receive it not, as the reſult of examination and conviction, but through the prejudice of education, and the example of others. The corruption of human nature, and the general current of this world's purſuits run as contrary to all the characteriſtic maxims of the goſpel, as if men were yet heathens, notwithſtanding their profeſſions of Chriſtianity. Hence the alliance of church and ſtate uſually forms but a heterogeneous mixture, and is productive only of a ſpurious brood.

The goſpel refuſes not the foſtering hand of human aſſiſtance, but

aſks no more than the liberty to be freely promulged. This is its element. It needs no auxiliary arm: and it can riſe ſuperior to all the power, malice and wiles of men and devils, but it is independent of both: the former can no more give it efficacy, than the latter is capable of extinguiſhing its luſtre. Indeed that the goſpel can ſubſiſt unadulterated in the ſunſhine of human patronage, requires the ſame divine Power, as to enable it to endure the flames of perſecution.

Whether human eſtabliſhments of Chriſtianity, and temporal advantages annexed to the profeſſion of it, have really conduced to the advance-

ment of pure religion, is a matter capable of much controverſy: that they have contributed to hypocritical ſubſcriptions, falſe vows, lying prayers, and party zeal, may be readily admitted; but that the goſpel hath received any meaſure of its efficacy from ſuch protection, may be ſafely doubted.

It is however matter of no doubt, whether the efforts of coercive power, and penalties to ſupport or promote the cauſe of God, have been beneficial. Theſe are too oppoſite to the whole ſyſtem of the goſpel to be admitted as auxiliaries, from the higheſt to the loweſt meaſure of puniſhment inflicted by magiſtrates, for opinions

opinions or practices, merely relative to God and religion, that interfere not with, or disturb the peace of society. So far from serving the cause of truth, every such infliction of pains and penalties, must be injurious and contrary to the spirit of Christianity, just in proportion to their severity.

The gospel inculcates all those heavenly dispositions, which are most friendly to the peace and comfort of mankind: love, patience, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness of injuries, submission, uprightness, truth, stand contrasted against all bitterness, wrath, anger and clamour, evil speaking, envy, malice, revenge, injustice, falsehood, severity, cruelty. The exer-

ciſe of the one is as characteriſtic of the Spirit of Chriſt, as the other demonſtrates the ſpirit of antichriſt.

The hiſtory of what is called the Church of Chriſt, ſince the apoſtle's days, uſually contains the moſt horrid libels, that ever were publiſhed againſt the Chriſtian religion. All that has been written by infidels to depreciate the goſpel, and ſap its foundations, is trivial, compared with the practice of thoſe who have erected themſelves into defenders of the faith by the power of the ſecular arm. Red with the blood of ſaints and martyrs, the whore, who ſitteth upon the ſeven hills, though the chief, yet is ſhe not alone in the tranſgreſſion.

The

The church Proteſtant as well as Papiſt, leaning on the ſword of ſtate, exhibits, whatever party hath been uppermoſt, a ſcene of oppreſſions, cruelties, injuſtice, impriſonments, exiles, murders, that would be a diſgrace to any religion. Whoever will attentively examine the hiſtory of all national churches, will ſee in multiplied inſtances, the trueſt members of Chriſt, moſt unjuſtly maligned, cenſured, oppreſſed; and be ſurprized, to find the moſt faithful ſervants of Jeſus in every age ſtigmatized with enthuſiaſm, ſchiſm, and hereſy.

Nor can it in the nature of things be well otherwiſe, for not only do the lives and principles of true chriſti-

ans diſcover the falſehood, and upbraid the unworthineſs of nominal profeſſors, and thereby neceſſarily awaken their enmity: but power lodged in the hands of corrupted creatures is always too liable to abuſe; and as "not many mighty are called," it is humanly ſpeaking impoſſible, but that the great men of this world, having uſually the leaſt portion of true religion, ſhould in all religious eſtabliſhments make an ill uſe of their power, with the exerciſe of which they are intruſted. And though from the milder genius of more temperate governments, where civil rights are more reſpected, and equal laws prevail, the monſter's teeth are broken, pride, bigotry, ſelf-will, and inſolence in high places,

places, will always find an ample field for the exerciſe of injuſtice and oppreſſion, over inferiors unable to reſiſt, or conſcious of their inequality in every ſuch contention.

To enjoy freedom from oppreſſion, is indeed the natural right of every conſcience, and profeſſedly admitted to be ſo in the principles of every Proteſtant: and to prevent as much as poſſible every infringment upon it, will be the wiſdom and proſperity of every ſtate.

Whatever religious tenets any man may embrace, whilſt he preſumes not to tranſgreſs the civil laws, or diſturb the peace of the ſociety, in which he abides,

abides, he is intitled to protection, and may juſtly claim to worſhip God in the way and mode, which according to the convictions of his conſcience ſhall appear moſt agreeable to the Divine Will. Why ſhould not the Jew erect his ſynagogue, the Chineſe his pagod, the Mahometan his moſque, the Parſee his fire-altar, if they approve their fidelity as ſubjects, and ſubmit to the civil laws of the county in which they reſide?

But if even idolatry claims toleration, and is to be ſuppreſſed and overturned, not by the ſword of ſtate but by the ſword of the Spirit; and perſuaſion not violence is the mode preſcribed in the goſpel, for the conver-

ſion

ſion of thoſe, who err from the truth; how much more ought every man, who makes profeſſion of the faith of Chriſt to be permitted the free exerciſe of his own underſtanding, reſpecting the articles, which he embraces, and the form of worſhip, he may judge moſt conducive to his edification?

But ſurely of all intolerancy the moſt contradictory, and oppoſite to every dictate of candour and uprightneſs, is the enmity againſt, and ill uſage of thoſe, who are united with us in *the ſame profeſſion of faith* and *the ſame form of worſhip*, only becauſe they conſcientiouſly and literally embrace the one, and devoutly and ſpiritually

uſe

uſe the other. But, you will ſay, "They are enthuſiaſtically inclined "—they charge us with not believing "the articles, which we have mutu- "ally ſubſcribed in their literal, and "grammatical ſenſe—and not under- "ſtanding the real meaning and im- "port of our own prayers."——Well —And if the charge be true, it is an awful one, and deſerves conſideration:—if the charge be falſe their miſtake deſerves pity, not enmity, and to be refuted in love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs; for ſuch, and ſuch only are the allowed weapons of our warfare. It is very aſtoniſhing, that thoſe, who boaſt of candor, and make benevolence the firſt article of religion; who can ſtand forth as advo-

cates

cates for Jews, Turks, and Infidels; who will condeſcend to call a Diſſenter, a proteſtant brother; nor even mention a Papiſt, without charity, and hope; that ſuch ſhould not feel the glaring abſurdity of treating a member of their own community with ſeverity, merely becauſe he adheres to the profeſſion of his faith with more litteral exactneſs, and poſſeſſes, or affects to poſſeſs more ſpirituality of devotion, and conduct. Are theſe then the only errors, and crimes that are not to be tolerated? Strange inconſiſtence! Yet ſo it is—ſo it hath been—ſo it ever will be. Whether the church eſtabliſhed be Lutheran, or Calviniſt, Epiſcopal, Preſbyterian, or Independent—it makes no difference

ence in this reſpect. Every real Chriſtian will find the principle of intolerancy operating againſt *him;* becauſe his ſpirit and practice muſt condemn the world, and in every nation, and under every eſtabliſhment, the world and the god of it, will ever have the majority of votaries. "Be- "cauſe ye are not of the world, but "I have choſen you out of the world, "therefore the world hateth you." John xv. 19.

Let it be however acknowledged as a truth highly honorable to the Church of England as by law eſtabliſhed, that ſcarce under any goverment, hath toleration appeared more generally and liberally allowed, than under its auſpices

auſpices at this day. Thankful for the mercies we enjoy, every man of reflection, conſidering the years that are paſt can hardly deſire a change, whatever imperfections may be chargeable upon it. All human inſtitutions will be imperfect. Alterations are dangerous. None of our ſectaries, when in power and office, have given a ſpecimen of equal liberality. Wiſhing therefore only to the miniſters and rulers of our church, more Chriſtian love, greater fidelity, mutual forbearance, and zeal tempered with meekneſs; I can only ſay as the worthy Fra Paolo of his country, Eſto perpetua.

ESSAY XII.

ON THE GREAT EVIL OF COVETOUSNESS.

AMONG the black catalogue of ſins that ſtand branded in the book of God, with declarations of the divine diſpleaſure, there is not one, which is more ſtrongly marked with abomination, and ſpoken of with greater abhorrence, than *the ſin of Covetouſneſs.** Other evils indeed ſeem to ſhow a viſage more frightful, and

* Pſalm cx. 3.

and to diſplay features more horrid, and forbidding, but none more effectually militate againſt the ſpirit of the goſpel, or prove productive of greater miſchief and ruin to the ſouls of men. The conſcience ſtarts at the approach of groſſer crimes, ſuch as murder, adultery, theft, purjury, profaneneſs, and the like; but a thouſand different maſks conceal the deformity of this great ſin, and its deceitfulneſs prevents the ſhock, which our approaches to it would otherwiſe produce. Nay, oftentimes Covetouſneſs comes recommended under ſuch guiſes of expedience, with ſuch pleas of prudence, and claims of duty, that the ſerpent, which ſhould be cruſhed, is warmed in our boſom.

Without

Without perceiving the ſtate of criminality into which we are ſinking, we are ready to approve what God abhorreth; to transfer our firſt affections from their only worthy object, to the god of this world, and *to worſhip and ſerve the creature, more than the Creator, who is bleſſed forever more.**

To thoſe who are *without*, warnings are in vain; the bleſſing of them is reſerved for thoſe that are *within;* who "working out their ſalvation "with fear and trembling," conſider it, as the one thing needful, ſo to paſs through the things temporal, as finally not to loſe the things eternal. To theſe it will be among the firſt cares,

* Rom. i. 25.

cares, to *take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs*,* as the worm, which will make the gourd of profeſſion to wither; as the latent poiſon, which will prey upon the vitals of true Chriſtianity.

To define Covetouſneſs with preciſion is difficult, though its effects are eaſily diſcoverable. Every individual, from the ſituation in which the divine Providence hath placed him, hath a peculiar line of duty, ariſing from his particular circumſtances in life, and the various relations which he bears to others. Not to lay by him in ſtore a due proviſion for his family, and the exigencies of his calling, would be in one man to "deny the faith and to be worſe than "an

* Luke xii. 15.

"an infidel;"* Whilſt in another, who ſhould be under no ſuch obligations, the ſame proviſion made, the ſame wealth accumulated, would be the evidence of that "covetouſneſs, "which is idolatry."†

There are two views that ariſe out of this ſubject, by which we may trace the line of uprightneſs, and the workings of worldly-mindedneſs; and theſe regard *the acquiſition*, and *the employment* of wealth.

I would juſt premiſe, that I may not be miſunderſtood, that the ſcripture no where ſuppoſes, there is any evil in the poſſeſſion of the good

* 1 Tim. v. 8. † Col. iii. 5.

things of this world. Some of God's deareſt ſaints, and moſt eminent for piety, have enjoyed a very large meaſure of creature comforts. Nor is the acquiſition of wealth condemned as an evil; ſo far from it, that the ſcriptures aſſure us, "the hand of the "diligent maketh rich,"* and "what "the bleſſing of the Lord beſtows, "he giveth no ſorrow with it."† Induſtry is commendable, and its reward honourable; but idleneſs is the pregnant ſource of every vice. Therefore *what thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.*‡ In whatever worldly vocation any man is placed, he is therein bound with all diligence, to be found *walking worthy of God*,"§ and

† in

* Prov. x. 4. † Prov. x. 22.
‡ Eccleſ. ix. 10. § 1 Theſſ. ii. 12.

in the proper diſcharge of our ſeveral callings, the true diſplay of the Chriſtian temper and conduct will moſt eminently appear.

In all our worldly engagements we are bound never to ſeek acquiſitions by *undue means*. Truth, and uprightneſs muſt characteriſe all our tranſactions. It is impoſſible for any man, under the prevailing influence of Covetouſneſs, to be honeſt, whatever appearance he may maintain. He will, when occaſion offers, ſacrifice truth to advantage. For *as the nail ſticketh between the joining of the ſtones ſo doth lying between buying and ſelling*. To depreciate what we would purchaſe; and to exaggerate the value of what

we would ſell above its intrinſic worth —to take advantage of the ignorance, or neceſſity of others in our dealings with them, whether in much or in little, is the ſure proof of a heart under the curſe of Covetouſneſs.

An *undue end* propoſed, may be alſo as pregnant a proof of this evil temper as undue means employed. This will appear characteriſtically ſtricking in the work of the miniſtry: when gain, not godlineſs is the motive, that influences men to aſſume that holy calling. It is true "the la-"bourer is worthy of his hire."* and "they who preach the goſpel ſhould "live by the goſpel."† But where the hire

* Luke x. 7. † 1 Cor. ix. 14.

hire is more coveted, than the labour is delighted in—when the profeſſion is choſen as the means to procure the preferment—-and the ſalvation of men's ſouls inſtead of being the firſt conſideration, is ſcarce a ſecondary idea; and perhaps wholly out of the queſtion, ſo that the value of the benefice is enhanced by the ſmallneſs of the duty which need be done—— Here the brand of Covetouſneſs is in the right hand and on the forehead.

Even where the ſervice is diſcharged with apparent zeal, and ſemblance of ſincerity, how often do bye ends inſinuate themſelves; and "looking," however ſecretly, every man to his "gain from his quarter,"* how

* Iſai. lvi. 11.

do ſuch falſe apoſtles ſtill "ſacrifice "to their own net and burn incenſe "to their own drag?"*

All *inordinate affections*, even in purſuit of lawful advantages, are the effects of evil concupiſcence. The things of time and ſenſe ſhould occupy only a ſecondary place in our hearts. "*Seek ye firſt the kingdom of* "*God, and his righteouſneſs*,"† is the evangelical precept, nor ſhould the acquiſitions which we make ever unduly elate, nor the providential loſſes or diſappointments we may meet with too deeply depreſs us.

Covetouſneſs makes an idol of its gains, and wealth; and dances like Iſrael

* Habak. i. 19. † Matth. vi. 33.

Iſrael before the golden calf; inſtead of "*poſſeſſing, as though we poſſeſſed* "*not.*"*

And the ſame ſpirit reſents as bitterly the deprivation of worldly goods, crying like Micah after his ſtolen gods.† Under the croſſes, loſſes, diſappointments of life, how much greater bitterneſs and diſtreſs do we ſee felt, and expreſſed, than a ſenſe of ſin ever awakened? But the heart that ſupremely ſeeks and finds its portion in God, can ſay in the midſt of proſperity, "My goods are "nothing unto thee," "neither is there "ought upon earth I deſire in com-

 "pariſon

* 1 Cor. vii. 30. † Judg. xvii. 22.

" riſon of thee,"* I have had as great " delight in the way of thy teſtimo- " nies, as in all manner of riches."† And when the Lord who gave is pleaſed to take away from us theſe outward advantages in any providential way; even though reduced like Job, to extremities, and naked as we came from the womb, we are ready to return to the grave; humble ſubmiſſion to his will, and chearful acquieſcence in his diſpenſations will characteriſe the real Chriſtian, who is " crucified unto the world, and the world unto *him.*"§

The

* Pſalm lxxiii. 25. † Pſalm cxix. 14.
§ Gal. vi. 14.

The *employment* of our poſſeſſions, as well as the mode of their acquiſition, deſerves our ſerious concern, "*uſing* "*this world as not abuſing it.*"*

Covetouſneſs ever diſpoſes men to live unto themſelves, and to hold faſt what they have. Hence the reluctance felt, in parting with the unrighteous mammon, marks the deep poſſeſſion it hath taken of the heart. When even lawful debts are to be paid, and neceſſary expences to be incurred, the ſelfiſh ſpirit, delays as long as poſſible, and when it can procraſtinate no longer, parts with money as with ſo many drops of blood.

* 1 Cor. vii. 31.

When the calls of endeared relations, or the claims of indigence preſent themſelves before the liberal, he not only gives, but is "*ready* to diſ-"tribute, *willing* to communicate,"* and feels greater bleſſedneſs in beſtowing than in receiving. The very reverſe is the ſenſation of the covetous, inſatiate as the "horſe-leach's "daughter, his cry is, Give, give;"† and his firſt joy is to accumulate. The good man delights in diſpenſing abroad; his hand is open, and his heart is happy to ſupply the wants of thoſe dependant upon him. The demands of his family never meet a furrowed brow; nor are the diſtreſſes of thoſe, who crave his aſſiſtance relieved

* Acts xx. 35. † Proy. xxx. 15.

lieved "grudgingly or of neceſſity,"* but with a chearfulneſs and readineſs which bring a preſent reward. If we can make the old age of a parent more comfortable it is our pleaſure to "ſhew piety at home, and to requite "them,"‡ for all their former cares in the days of infancy, and if our friend be in exigencies, the ſtability of his ſecurity ſtays not our aſſiſtance, "lending often even where we expect "not to receive any thing again,"†

Nor ſhould our bounty flow to thoſe only, who have more immediate claims upon us, but extend as far as our abilities reach, and the diſtreſſes of the miſerable ſolicit our

* 2 Cor. ix. 7. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 4.
† Luke vi. 34.

commiſeration and relief. If we would walk worthy the name we bear, "none of us ſhould live unto him-"ſelf,"* but as ſtewards of the manifold gifts of God, feel ourſelves engaged to employ, what we have received from the Divine Bounty, in ſuch a manner as will beſt ſerve the purpoſes of the divine glory. To improve the talent entruſted to our care will be our firſt object, and concern, as "thoſe who muſt give an ac-"count."‡

Covetouſneſs hath a thouſand ſpecious pleas, to ſhut up the bowels of compaſſion. And where ought is extorted by exigencies, which we cannot

* Rom. xiv. 7. ‡ Luke xvi. 2.

help ſupplying, or by importunities, againſt which we are not proof, it is done "grudgingly, and of neceſſity," ſo ſcantily in the meaſure, and ſo ungraciouſly in the manner, that the very act of charity itſelf bears the characteriſtic ſtamp of uncharitableneſs, and diſcovers the heart, in which the love of God and our brethren either never dwelt, or is waxed cold.

What meaſure of our worldly goods ſhould be devoted to the ſervice of our brethren, and fellow creatures, it is impoſſible to determine. "*The li-*
"*beral deviſeth liberal things.*"‡ We need little fear exceſs of bounty; or that we ſhould lay up too much of our

‡ Iſai. xxxii. 8.

commiſeration and relief. If we would walk worthy the name we bear, "none of us ſhould live unto himſelf,"* but as ſtewards of the manifold gifts of God, feel ourſelves engaged to employ, what we have received from the Divine Bounty, in ſuch a manner as will beſt ſerve the purpoſes of the divine glory. To improve the talent entruſted to our care will be our firſt object, and concern, as "thoſe who muſt give an account."‡

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our treaſure in Heaven. We are told of ſome, who "to their power, "yea, and beyond their power, were "willing,"* and they are ſpoken of by the apoſtle with high commendation; and indeed on this ſide, few offend, whilſt all the ſelfiſh reaſonings of the fallen heart are ever reading the ſcripture backwards: as if "gain "was godlineſs," and our riches conſiſted in the uſeleſs lumber, we poſſeſſed, more than in the happy ſuperfluity which beſtowing, on the neceſſitous and the worthy, perhaps ſometimes on the unworthy, we have laid up "*in bags, which wax not old.*"†

It muſt be acknowledged that ſome are not only liberal, but prodigal; yet

* 2 Cor. viii. 3. † Luke xii. 33.

yet *their* avarice keeps pace with their profuſion. Laviſhly as they ſpend on themſelves, their paſſions or their caprice, "they covet and deſire to "have"* with the ſame inordinate affection. In the employment as well as the acquiſition of their wealth, they are actuated by the ſame ſpirit. But thoſe, who profeſs to be living, not for time but eternity, are in a great meaſure cut off "from making pro-"viſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts "thereof."† The genius of the religion of the Son of God admits not of their waſting, the ſuperfluities of their wealth, on pride, folly and ſenſuality, and thus the gulphs which ſwallow up the ſubſtance of others, are

* James iv. 2. † Rom. xiii. 14.

are in ſome ſort cloſed to them: whilſt the duty, which obliges them, to habits of diligence and induſtry, naturally increaſes their ability to every good work, peculiarly therefore are they without excuſe, if they "abound "not in the riches of their liber- "ality."*

God indeed who "giveth to us li- "berally and upbraideth not," beſtows his mercies with the fulleſt permiſſion "richly to enjoy them."‡ "Eat thy bread and drink thy wine "with a merry heart for God now "accepteth thy works."† It is not in monkiſh vows of voluntary poverty,

* 2 Cor. viii. 3. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 17.
† Eccleſ. ix. 7.

verty, or " in abſtaining from meats " which God hath commanded to be " received with thankſgiving by thoſe, " who believe and know the truth,"* that real mortification, and deadneſs to the world conſiſts. " Every crea- " ture of God is good, and none to be " refuſed," in the proper uſe of them, for " it is ſanctified by the word of " God, and by prayer." But with ſuch a ſanctified uſe of creature-comforts, uſeleſs profuſion and unhallowed indulgence will find no place, this would prevent and diſable us from breaking our bread to the hungry, and giving a portion to the afflicted. Yea, much rather ſhould we debar ourſelves ſomewhat of the abundance we

* Tim. iv, 3, 5

we might afford; retrench a meaſure of our own expence in food, apparel, or appearance, that we may more liberally ſupply the wants of others; and live below the ſtile of life, which our gains or fortune, might without cenſure maintain; that others may find their ſupport in that retrenchment which would really add nothing to our own comforts. Indeed ſuch a ſaving well beſtowed would bring a large balance of ſatisfaction in our favour, from the bleſſings of the needy; without taking into the account, that "he that hath pity on the poor "lendeth unto the Lord."*

But the rich among men are comparatively few, and among the faithful

* Prov. xix 17.

ful proportionably much fewer, ſince "not many mighty are called." Nor is it to the ſuperior ranks of life that covetouſneſs is forbidden. They who have little are equally bound to give of that little, and come under the ſame condemnation if they do not. As nature and ſelf are always pleading for thoſe, more immediately near and dear to us, many ſhelter themſelves under the needful proviſion for a family, from acts of chriſtian liberality; and make piety at home, and prudence, the plea for their parſimony; when in fact the pleaſure of getting and ſaving, or the pride of raiſing a fortune for children is more the motive of their conduct, than any real regard for thoſe, to whoſe future neceſſities

ceſſities they pretend to pay ſo pious an attention.

A portion of every man's gains, as God hath proſpered him, ſhould always be appropriated to acts of benevolence,* nor ſhould thoſe, who are placed in the inferior ſtations of life, conſider themſelves as exempted. By age, ſickneſs, or misfortunes, ſome indeed are reduced to live upon the bounty of others; ſuch poverty is no ſhame. But to be burthenſome to others, where our own efforts could relieve our wants, would be criminal. If God's providence hath not raiſed us above the neceſſity of manual labour, whilſt we have ability and ſtrength we are

* 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

are bound to work with our hands, not merely to ſupply our own neceſſities, but that "we may have ſome-"thing to give to him that needeth."* In the primitive church the practice was, that every member "on the firſt "day of the week ſhould lay by him "in ſtore"‡ for charitable purpoſes a part of his gains or ſubſtance, whether leſs or more, according "as God had "proſpered him."‡ And as the ſpirit of the giver, not the quality of the oblation, ſtamps excellence on the deed, it is *accepted* always, *according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*‖

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* Eph. iv. 28. ‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 2.
‖ 2 Cor. viii. 12.

The ſame tempers operate uniformly. Covetouſneſs, as well as charity appears in the loweſt orders of life, as in the higheſt. Thus, where it prevails, not only is the abundance, which others poſſeſs, regarded with an evil eye: but even the acts of bounty beſtowed on others, become to the covetous matter of envy; they repine inſtead of rejoicing at the favours ſhown to their fellows, and feel it an injury done to them; murmuring that he who diſpenſes his bounty, "doth, whatſoever he will with his "own."*

To take delight in the good done to others, as if it were to ourſelves, is

* Matt. xx. 15.

is as ſure an evidence of a liberal heart, as to bear one another's burdens; and the reverſe, as ſure a proof of ſelfiſhneſs.

The ſpirit and intention mark the character. The widow's mite, and the cup of cold water in the name of a diſciple beſpeak the liberal ſoul. Whilſt the largeſt gifts—the efforts of occaſional generoſity—to ſooth the feelings of compaſſion—or gratify the importunity of others; extorted often by pride or ſhame—and always without a ſingle eye to God's *glory;* however profitable they may be unto men, are of no value in the ſight of God, and continue to be ſtamped as the works of thoſe, whoſe whole temper and

and conduct are ſtill devoted to the ſervice of Mammon, and to that "co-"vetouſneſs which is idolatry."

An evil ſo beſetting, a ſin ſo deceitful, a crime ſo common, yet ſo little felt, or lamented, among thoſe, who would be thought followers of the Lamb of God, it becometh us to guard againſt, with the moſt jealous watchfulneſs.

When we come to die, what we leave behind us can never give the thouſandth part of the ſatisfaction, which that, which we have ſent before us will then afford. The treaſures, which we have laid up in Heaven, will in that awful hour be felt as

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the enduring ſubſtance, whilſt thoſe we are quitting upon earth, prove more frequently the ſnare, than the comfort of our poſterity. So that without placing any dependence on our doings or duties, as entitling us for their own ſake to the divine favour, we ſhall remember them with ſatisfaction, and be thankful that we have been enabled in our ſtation to aim at glorifying God upon Earth; to the praiſe of his grace will all be aſcribed, whilſt we know that *bleſſed are the dead, which die in the Lord, that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.**

* Rev. xvi. 13.

ESSAY XIII.

ON EVIL SPEAKING.

AMONG the ſtrongeſt characteriſtics of the true grace of God, and the beſt evidences of the ſincerity of our chriſtian profeſſion, we may juſtly reckon a ſacred and conſcientious regard to truth in all our converſation.

The power of corruption, and the proof of an apoſtate nature, are ſcarce in any thing more glaringly manifeſt,

than in the diſpoſition to falſehood which appears from our earlieſt infancy. He, that was "a liar from "the beginning,"* has ſtamped this ſtrong lineament of his features upon his offspring. "They are lying chil- "dren;"‖ not merely in particular inſtances, but as the whole tenor of their converſation and conduct is by nature under the influence, of pride, envy and ſelfiſhneſs, and theſe neceſſarily lead "to lying lips and a deceit- "ful tongue."§

I mean not however ſo much to advert to the ſtate of the world in general, and that ſyſtem of falſehood and diſſimulation which prevails, as to thoſe

* John viii. 44. ‖ Iſai. xxx. 9.
§ Pſalm cxx. 2.

thoſe, who make profeſſion of being influenced by a purer principle, than their fellows, and to acknowledge a divine obligation lying upon them, "of ſpeaking every man truth with "his neighbour."‡

Chriſtian morality bears a ſtamp of its divine Original. There is a greatneſs, extent, and dignity in the practices, which it enjoins, that can never be found out of the Bible, no where elſe are they marked with ſuch preciſion; ſupported with ſuch arguments; nor attended with thoſe influences of divine grace, there promiſed, to all who diligently ſeek them. And nothing ſerves more ſtrongly to demon-

 ſtrate

‡ Eph. iv. 25.

monſtrate how few truly live under a conviction of the reality of thoſe principles, which they profeſs to believe, than the want of ſacred regard to truth among the many, who bear the chriſtian name.

"To ſpeak evil of no man,"* is the reſult of that kind ſpirit, which "thinketh no evil,"‖ and inſtead of a readineſs to ſuſpect, or credulity to receive reports, gives the beſt interpretation, to what may appear dubious, and "hopeth all things."

There is ſomething ſhocking in *making a lie* deliberately to injure another; but the difference is very little, when men *love*

* Tit. iii. 2. ‖ 1 Cor. xiii. 5—7.

love a lie;* take pleaſure in ſpreading the evil, which they hear, and without evidence, on mere ſuſpicion, or at the relation of others perhaps ſecretly envious, or offended, adopt their miſrepreſentations and propagate them.

Many ſeem to think one eminent degree would be wanting to their own excellence, if their fellows were not degraded, and pride themſelves in the hypocritical zeal, which they teſtify againſt the faults, whether real or pretended, of their brethren. Envy thus often cloaks itſelf with indignation, and malice aſſumes the garb of pity: for the pretext of lamenting the evils real or imaginary of others, is

* Rev. xxii. 15.

of the commoneſt means of inſinuating untruth, or baſe reflection.

They who are truly conſcientious Chriſtians, are *uniformly* ſuch. Yet ſome appear ſhocked at particular evils, who are inſenſible to others, which the word of God brands with equal criminality. How many would think the character of a drunkard, or a whoremonger reprobative, who ſeem to annex no ideas of evil, or very inferior ones to "a railer" or "a buſybody in other men's matters?" How many would be ſhocked at blaſphemy or perjury, who feel no pangs of conſcience from "bitterneſs, or evil-ſpeaking?" Yet the one is as contrary to the ſpirit of Jeſus as the other;

other; and as expreſsly forbidden in the ſame paſſages of ſcripture.*

It is not merely in the world that openly lyeth in wickedneſs, that ſcandal affords the favourite and general topic of converſation. Among thoſe who profeſs better things, how many long details might be ſpared, and how much more uſeful, at leaſt innocent, might be the converſation, if religious perſons avoided all mention of others, whoſe example was not produced to ſtimulate us to imitation.

I may venture to ſay ſeldom, very ſeldom, if ever, can the faults of individuals be made a profitable ſub-

* 1 Cor. v. 11. Rom. iii. 14. Eph. iv. 31.

ject of converſation: and never ought they to be produced, unleſs ſome very manifeſt danger ſhould ariſe from the concealment of them, againſt which charity obliges us to put our brethren on their guard.

Two things are eſſentially neceſſary in order to our forming a concluſion to the prejudice of any man. The one that the charge brought or inſinuated againſt them *is true*, the other that the thing charged againſt them *be evil*.

With regard to the truth of facts, every man who hath two ears is bound to uſe both, before he makes up his judgment. Hear the other ſide,

ſide, is the ſimpleſt dictate of prudence and juſtice. To condemn any man, on the report of another, who may be his ſecret enemy, is, not only the mark of want of candor, but alſo of good ſenſe. Even facts may be ſo diſtorted and miſrepreſented; that, paſſing through the medium of prejudice, or malice, they receive a tint, that cannot but darken and diſfigure what is moſt innocent, or well deſigned, and palm upon them meanings and intentions, that in themſelves they never bore. Allow therefore at leaſt every man to explain himſelf, before any criminal charge is received againſt him.

Many times alſo the charges themſelves, ſpeak the malignant ſpirit of

the reporters, and that phariſaical pride, which dictates the accuſation; fixing upon things in themſelves of an indifferent nature, and aggravating them into crimes by the colouring given to them, or as it is often the caſe, by impiouſly daring to call that evil, which God hath not made ſo; and under the ſpecious guiſe of ſuperior ſanctity, undermining the character of better men than themſelves, by affecting to condemn, what God's word hath not condemned. This is one of the commoneſt ſources of evil judging and evil-ſpeaking: where things of an indifferent nature are made to bear the ſtamp of the ſame criminality, as the moſt marked iniquities, and as I have ſomewhere ſeen even in print the killing

ing a partridge is placed on the ſame line of evil, with a drunken carouſal.

Reverence for truth will always make us cautious how we receive unfavorable reports of any man; and true charity will awaken ſuſpicious vigilance againſt the baleful effects of prejudice; for it requires no ſmall degree of wiſdom, and no common meaſure of grace not to give way to firſt impreſſions, and to be prejudiced againſt thoſe, of whom we hear what is *really* evil, or what is *called ſo*, frequently reported. It is ſo much eaſier to adopt miſrepreſentation, than to acquaint ourſelves with facts; and ſcandal true or falſe finds ſo ready an admiſſion into the mind, that few are really

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really able to preſerve themſelves wholly unbiaſſed from evil report. And as a ſtrong underſtanding, and great grace, are ſeldom the portion of the ſame man, the weakneſs of the ſincere becomes ſometimes as miſchievous, as the malignity of the wicked.

To conceal real evil, and caſt the veil of compaſſion over the faults of our brethren, becomes a gracious heart; "tell him at leaſt the fault "between him and thee,"* before the report reaches a third ear, and uſually bury in ſilence, even what you cannot amend. Interpret favorably, whatever can bear a favorable conſtruction,

* Matth. xviii. 15.

conſtruction, and be peculiarly guarded in your judgment, where the perſon is your ſuperior in any ſenſe; or your intereſt be never ſo remotely concerned, leaſt the influence of pride, envy and ſelfiſhneſs ſhould bias your mind in forming your deciſion.

It would be perhaps no bad rule, in every company to reſolve, not only to ſpeak no evil of any man, but not to believe the evil, we may hear reported, without ſuch evidence, as it is impoſſible to ſuſpect or refute; and to ſupport the cauſe of the reviled, and the abſent with thoſe candid and kind interpretations, that at leaſt will ſerve to repreſs ſomething of the

the aſperity of malevolence: for people would be more cautious of evil ſpeaking, if they did not promiſe themſelves a credulous attention.—And at leaſt ought we to maintain our own ſpirits uninfluenced, and more open to the juſtification of the injured, than to the reports of uncharitableneſs.

When I hear a perſon always ready to caſt in ſomething degrading, wherever a character of eminence in any view is mentioned, he reminds me of the Indian, who by torturing the captive warrior, expects to inherit a portion of his ſpirit.

It is impoſſible to ſay how far an inſinuation haſtily uttered, may tend, not

not merely to the prejudice of an individual, but be the means of preventing his uſefulneſs, and produce conſequences of evil to the lateſt poſterity.

Few have ever found themſelves reproved by their own conſciences for ſaying too little; or for maintaining ſtrict reſerve over their lips: many, very many, have repented bitterly and too late, for having opened themſelves unguardedly, or dropp'd unadviſedly, reflections on others, which they have not only afterwards deeply condemned themſelves for, but have been conſcious of the impoſſibility of averting the injury, which they have done, by any ſubſequent endeavours. I have told

told a thouſand lies of you, (ſaid a biſhop's lady to an acquaintance of mine whoſe character on a near intimacy appeared to be the very reverſe of the repreſentations ſhe had received) "I have told a thouſand lies of "of you, but I will immediately endeavour to do you juſtice, by diſpatching the truth after them." "Ah! madam," ſaid ſhe, very ſenſibly, "the truth will never overtake "them."

"Out of the abundance of the "heart the mouth ſpeaketh."* Hence proceed "the evil thoughts, the pride "and blaſphemy,"§ that are the ſure criterion of its unrenewed nature. Here

* Matt. xii. 34. § Mark vii. 22.

Here therefore we muſt begin. When the heart is the ſeat of love, "in the "tongue will be the law of kindneſs."* Truth will be the firſt object, and ſacredly mantained—We ſhall never be emboldend to lie even in jeſt. No human conſideration will tempt us to a deliberate untruth. And whatever would tend to the injury of others, will be regarded with a jealous aſpect; and watchful care exerted againſt the evil, that we would not; leaſt incautiouſneſs, curioſity, haſte, not to ſay the worſe motives of a malignant ſpirit, ſhould betray us into miſrepreſentations of the conduct of others, or inſinuations of any kind to their diſadvantage. They are truly great,

* Prov. xxxi. 26.

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great, who "in honor prefer others "to themſelves."* The excellence of our own character will riſe, not by the meaſure of detraction from others, but by the delight we feel, in rendering them the tribute of acknowledging, every thing that is praiſe-worthy, and reſpectable in them. The pain of believing evil of any man will forbid our taking pleaſure in hearing evil of them, and they who are taught to "love their enemies and bleſs thoſe "that curſe them,"§ will taſte a delight in becoming their advocates, which they never could attain in the gratification of their reſentments. And if our enemies call for this treatment at our hands, can we dare to be injurious

* Rom. xii. 10. § Matt. v. 44.

jurious to thoſe, whom we profeſs to call our friends?

" Strait indeed is the gate and nar-
" row is the way, that leadeth unto
" life; no marvel, if few there be
" that find it."*

* Matt. vii. 14.

ESSAY XIV.

ON THE GENERAL WEARISOMNESS OF LIFE—ITS CAUSE AND CURE.

SHORT as our life is, and ſharp as our complaints are of human frailty, how few are found among the children of men, who do not ſometimes feel their exiſtence a burden? Nor is this merely the caſe, when in the courſe of divine providence afflictions and diſappointments of various kinds, embitter life, and all the things of it,

it, but even in the boſom of abundance and where the heart is kept back from no joy, ſatiety itſelf breeds diſguſt, and men grow weary of themſelves; whilſt time, inſtead of being eſteemed precious, and diligently employed in the great purpoſes of their being, hangs ſo heavy on their hands, that all their contrivances ſcarce enable them to get rid of the irkſome load.

Never reflecting on the cauſe, but deeply feeling the effects of their ſituation, many, who are not immerſed in worldly purſuits, or compelled to labour for a maintenance, endeavour to eſcape from themſelves, by flying to the prevailing ſcenes of folly and diſſipation,

diſſipation, in which the gay and fa-ſhionable are involved, and though ever unſatisfactory, and often attended with more diſappointment than delight, theſe are courted as a refuge, becauſe they ſerve for the moment to benumb the ſenſibility of miſery; and act, as a temporary opiate to paſs ſo much of the dream of life, in forgetfulneſs of themſelves.

In the quick and conſtant ſucceſſions of worldly avocations, amidſt the ſtruggles of ambition, and the agitating conflicts of ſtrong paſſions, men may ſometimes indeed be ſo occupied, as for a while, to have their thoughts diverted from turning inwardly; but when their ſchemes ſuc-

ceed, and their ends are obtained, the poſſeſſion, brings not with it the portion, which they expected. Wealth, power, greatneſs, when the novelty of the acquiſition is over, (and that it is very ſoon) leave the ſame aking void as before. That, which as the object of purſuit, ſeemed ſo full of delights, palls, on the poſſeſſion. We never find in any acquiſition all the ſatisfaction, which we promiſed ourſelves. And the many anxieties and difficulties, which we have ſtruggled thro', are often looked back upon with regret, as a ſituation more deſirable, than the acquiſition itſelf. No ſooner is the mind at leiſure to view our poſſeſſions, than their inſufficiency to ſatisfy us is painfully felt, and the awful chaſm opens to our view.

It hath for ſuppoſition's ſake been admitted, that all our purpoſes ſhould ſucceed, and every wiſh be gratified; that abundance ſhall furniſh ability, and uninterrupted health allow us to take our fill of enjoyment; yet cannot theſe preſerve from a feeling of the tedioufneſs of time and the weariſomneſs of life: but how few, how very few, are thus circumſtanced? Scarce is there an individual, who paſſes the days of his pilgrimage, without proving the pangs of diſappointment, the faithleſſneſs of human confidences, the bereavements of his moſt endeared poſſeſſions, the pinings of diſeaſe, or the anguiſh of pain; then "the evil days come, in which "we can have no pleaſure,"* and from

* Eccleſ. xi. 1.

the afflictive ſtrokes under which we groan, every thing is embittered, and death courted as a refuge.

Nor need we look far, to diſcover the real cauſe of all this. It is to be found in the preſent ſtate of man: and the corruption entailed upon every ſon and daughter of Adam.

Immortal in his nature, and formed with faculties, which reach beyond the narrow bounds of time and ſenſe, the relation in which he ſtands to an eternal world neceſſarily, and involuntarily affects him, whilſt his earthly and ſenſual appetites groveling on the objects which ſurround him, meet perpetual

perpetual diſguſt and diſappointment, "ſeeking reſt and finding none."*

But as "his underſtanding is dark-"ened,"† and only "faith of the o-"peration of God"§ can realize the objects of eternity, which preſent themſelves, but indiſtinctly to the natural conſcience, he is often at a loſs to account for his own ſenſations, and ſuppoſing his diſappointment to ariſe, not ſo much from the inſufficiency of the things themſelves, as from his not procuring them in kind, meaſure, and duration, adequate to his deſires, he perſiſts, under other forms, and various modes to purſue them yet again.

* Matt. xii. 43. † Eph. iv. 18.
§ Col. ii. 12.

The multitudes around him concur, in encouraging the renewed effort, with hope of better ſucceſs, and though, trying to quench their thirſt from the ſame empty cup, they meet the ſame diſappointment, as their fellows, ſo far from daring to own the unſatisfactory nature of their pretended enjoyments, they conceal the bitterneſs, which their heart too well knoweth, and hypocritically pretend to find pleaſures, which they are conſcious elude their graſp.

Indeed if time bounds the proſpect of our enjoyments, and darkneſs and doubt thicken over the grave, it is not in the power of nature to prevent our being miſerable creatures. Try

as

as we can to eſcape from the feelings of wretchedneſs, it will follow us cloſe as our ſhadow; and the moſt thoughtleſs are incapable of ſtifling moments of reflection and apprehenſion, that will intrude, when the heart involuntarily ſinks into the painful ſenſation of its own miſery, and emptineſs, and feels the vanity of every thing beneath the ſun.

What then can ever reconcile man to himſelf, and his preſent ſituation? ONLY THE RELIGION OF JESUS, and the knowledge of him.—His glorious goſpel embraced, removes our fears—excites our hopes—gives ſtability to our confidences—and propoſing to us a portion adequate to all our

wants, enables us to look for a reſt, and pleaſures, which earth can neither give nor take away—to bear up undiſmayed under the evils inſeparable from humanity—to welcome the croſs, as leading to an eternal crown—to wait in godlineſs, and contentment 'till our appointed time ſhall come—and when it comes to meet the hour of diſſolution in ſure and certain hope of a bleſſed immortality.

This effectual cure of human wretchedneſs, muſt be ſought and found in the ſcriptures of truth; in them, and them alone, the grand ſecret is revealed to man, how he may paſs life without wearineſs, and meet death without dread.

Circum-

Circumſtanced as we are, it is impoſſible, without taking in the views beyond the grave, to have any ſolid cauſe of preſent enjoyment, or effectual ſupport againſt the miſeries inſeperable from a fallen nature.

Born in ſin, and conceived in wickedneſs, guilt breeds fear, and fear torment. In vain, we cry Peace, peace; in vain, we attempt to hide from ourſelves our real ſituation, and lull our conſciences into ſecurity by a round of cares, purſuits, or amuſements; the wound is not healed by theſe applications, the peecant matter lies corroding within. The moment of diſſipation ends, and the tide of miſery returns. All efforts to exclude

painful ſenſations become ineffectual. Even where crime upon crime ſears the conſcience, "the certain fearful "looking for of judgment,"* in the ſilence of darkneſs, in the hour of diſappointment, on the bed of ſickneſs, or in the day of calamity, will ſtill riſe up, like the ſpectre, to our view, and appal the heart of the moſt obdurate.

To have peace within, we muſt have peace with God. To be reconciled to the lot of mortality, we muſt be reconciled to him.

The revelation therefore which preſents to the uneaſy heart pardon and peace purchaſed by atoning blood, raiſes

* Heb. x. 27.

raiſes a firm barrier againſt the feelings of miſery. When the cauſe is removed, the effect ceaſes.

The redeemed ſinner, who enjoys a conſciouſneſs of the divine favour, takes up chearfully the burdens of mortality, knowing that the iſſue will be peace; aſſured, that all the ſteps conducting to the expected end, are directed by infinite wiſdom, and infinite love, and will terminate in eternal glory.

The grand remedy for all we feel, and all we fear, is "to walk by faith, "not by ſight."§ When we are convinced that the only ſubſtantial ob-

§ 2 Cor. v. 7.

jects, are thoſe, which are unſeen; and the great realities, ſuch as have their evidence from divine conviction in the conſcience, we ſhall begin to find reſt unto our ſouls.

Indeed all beſides is empty and unſatisfying. Well does the ſcripture therefore deſcribe the life of the ſons and daughters of men, "by walking "in a vain ſhadow, and diſquieting "themſelves in vain."§ for all their purſuits, enjoyments, objects, poſſeſſions, are altogether lighter than vanity itſelf. How can it then be otherwiſe, but that in the midſt of all, that earth can give, we ſhould hear the complaint "What a wearineſs is it?"‖

Deſigned

§ Pſalm. xxxix. 7. ‖ Mala. i. 13.

Deſigned for an eternal world, and born immortal, one thing muſt be ſupremely deſireable, to ſecure a glorious immortality. When all our ſteps tend to this end, and all our purſuits terminate in this object, then ſhall we begin, to anſwer the purpoſes of our being, and experience the bleſſedneſs reſulting from it.

I mean to eſtabliſh principles rather than deſcend to particulars, which would lead me too far. Holy and happy lives, and peaceful deaths are neceſſarily connected with "faith "which worketh by love." "Make "the tree good, and its fruit will be "good."†

A

† Matt. xii. 33.

A real Chriſtian has diſcovered the ſecret of enjoying without ſatiety—of ſuffering without diſcontent—of uſing this world without abuſing it—of paſſing through it as a ſtranger—ſatisfied with whatever occurs on the road—keeping his journey's end in view—not weary of life through diſguſt—but well pleaſed to quit his poſt, when his work is done. "Whether we live, "we live unto the Lord, or whether "we die, we die unto the Lord; whe-"ther we live, therefore, or die, we "are the Lord's."§

When thus, "to us to live is "Chriſt," when his will, his word, his glory, are our rule and end—when his

§ Rom. xiv. 8.

his promiſes realized by faith remove the poſſibility of doubt, reſpecting the conſequences of the change which muſt paſs upon us—then will life bear a quite different aſpect, and the grave diſarmed of all its terrors will ceaſe to make us afraid; "to die will be our "everlaſting gain."‡

I know that many affect to deſpiſe theſe verities, and treat with infidel contempt, what they have either never examined, or have decided upon, under the prevailing influence of their paſſions. They have their puniſhment in their crime, they never know true peace in life; and they are conſcious, that they have no well eſtabliſhed

‡ Philip i. 21.

liſhed hope in death. They have nothing in preſent enjoyments to be compared with the comforts of that religion which they reject; and they cannot but feel, that a leap in the dark is but a miſerable end, compared with the ſure and certain "hope of eternal "life which God, who cannot lie, "hath promiſed,"§ to thoſe who love him, and keep his commandments.

§ Tit. i. 2.

ESSAY XV.

ON THE BENEFIT OF EARLY MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE is of divine inſtitution. Even in the time of innocence "it was not good for man to be a-"lone."* A help-mate was therefore provided for him by his gracious Creator, and his benediction ſanctified their union in Paradiſe.

On his baniſhment from Eden in conſequence of the fall, and the unhappy

* Gen. ii. 18.

happy entail of his corruption on his poſterity, our paſſions and appetites have acquired greater violence. And as labor became on the depravation of all things, not only a puniſhment, but a preventive, to counteract the miſeries, neceſſarily now reſulting from idleneſs that fruitful parent of all vice; ſo is Marriage become a law of greater neceſſity, in order to remove the temptations to illicit commerce in the ſexes, and to form a barrier againſt the fearful conſequences of lawleſs concupiſcence, and promiſcuous intercourſe.

In times of ſingular diſtreſs indeed, amidſt the rage of ſanguinary perſecutions, when the cares and burdens of a family muſt have been attended with peculiar

peculiar difficulty, and greatly increaſed the danger of being tempted to deny Chriſt, for the ſake of thoſe ſo near and dear to us, the apoſtle *becauſe of the preſent diſtreſs*, recommended it, as a matter of prudence to avoid, as far as might be done without ſin, engagements in wedlock. But though the afflicted ſtate of the church rendered the advice then highly expedient, ſtill he obſerves it was no farther to be followed, than as every individual felt in himſelf the power of abſtinence: whilſt in all other caſes the preference was to be given to Marriage with whatever inconveniencies, it might be attended. Under the peaceable eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian church the original injunc-

tion

tion ſubſiſts, as univerſally binding, "that every man ſhould have his own "wife, and every woman her own "huſband;"* unleſs we except a few inſtances, where on account of ſome peculiarity of diſpoſition, or to anſwer ſome particular purpoſes of good to men's ſouls, a ſingle life ſhould be preferred; and then peculiar aſſiſtance may be expected for the peculiar call.

That the ordinance of God ſhould be moſt conducive to purity and piety is naturally to be ſuppoſed: and it is verified by the experience of all real Chriſtians, who enter into that holy eſtate. for whatever idea of higher perfection, the Church of Rome hath dared

* 1 Cor. vii.

dared to annex to conventual celibacy, dire experience hath glaringly demonſtrated the falſehood of ſuch pretentions. Indeed in the nature of things it is impoſſible, that it ſhould be otherwiſe, for all who bind themſelves by vows, to obligations, with which God hath not bound them, muſt neceſſarily by ſuch ſelf-impoſed bondages, ſubject themſelves to all the certain conſequences of ruſhing upon temptation; and rejecting the inſtituted means of God's appointment, plunge themſelves into real crime, whilſt they affect imaginary excellence.

The very exact proportion of males and females, ſeems to point out the law

law of nature, as perfectly correſponding with the ordinance of God. Providence has furniſhed each with his mate; more than one wife would neither conduce to purity of heart, nor ſocial comfort; beſides intrenching on the equal rights of mankind, an undue number appropriated to ſome, muſt leave others deſtitute of a companion, and place them in a ſituation as unnatural, and injurious to ſociety as contrary to the original inſtitution of the Moſt High.

Where the number of the ſexes is ſo nearly equal, there can be no doubt, that the multiplication of the ſpecies will be moſt effectually promoted, by the union of one man with one woman,

and

and thus, the firſt great end of Marriage beſt anſwered.

With reſpect to mutual comfort, in a ſtate of cultivated ſociety, whereever the weaker ſex hath ceaſed to be ſlaves, a divided bed could produce only miſery, jealouſy, and contention.

That the multiplying the mumber of wives would be any remedy againſt ſin, and the gratification of unreſtrained indulgence productive of temperance and purity, can ſcarcely be ſuppoſed an idea, capable of entering into the mind of any man of reaſon and religion. When once the ſacred line is tranſgreſſed, numbers only add fuel

to

to an unhallowed flame. And he that doth not reſt content with the ſanctified enjoyment of one, would never be ſatisfied with a ſeraglio. How much all mutual parental cares, purſuits, enjoyments would ſuffer by ſuch a ſyſtem, it ſeems needleſs to obſerve.

But whilſt the purity of our religion hath preſcribed the proper remedy againſt evil in the divinely ſanctioned ordinance of Marriage, all criminal intercourſe between the ſexes, is not only highly injurious to ſociety, and contrary to the real intereſt and comfort of the individuals themſelves, but ſtands branded in God's book, with the ſtrongeſt mark of reprobacy. "Fornication and all

"manner

" manner of uncleaneſs let it not be
" once named among you as becom-
" eth ſaints."* Whilſt the judgment of every whoremonger and adulterer is already decided; " they who do " ſuch things ſhall not inherit the " kingdom of God.†"

Whenever therefore any perſon arrived at the years of diſcretion, is conſcious, that it is no longer in his power, as a ſingle perſon, to preſerve himſelf pure; ſuch a one, as a Chriſtian has clearly no alternative, but to obey the divine inſtitution, or by expoſing himſelf to the fearful conſequences of the wages of ſin to periſh everlaſtingly. I put the caſe

 ſtrongly,

* Eph. v. iii. † Gal. v. 21.

ſtrongly, becauſe I wiſh every conſcience to feel the conviction of a truth, which in the world called Chriſtian, is very little attended to.

"Fools indeed make a mock at "ſin,"* and deſpiſe the warning of the Almighty, but whoever pays a reverential regard to divine authority, and chuſes not to ſtand branded as infidel, muſt admit the force of the concluſion.

The time of life, at which young perſons begin to feel attachments to each other, is ſo ordered by divine providence, that the ſtronger ſex is uſually more advanced in years, and capable

* Prov. xiv. 9.

capable of affording to the weaker, and younger, that protection, which they need. They are arrived to that ſtate of manhood when by their labours or exertions of whatever kind, they are capable of making proviſion for their offspring.

Few young men, therefore, I apprehend are to be found, (unſeduced by profligate companions, or uncorrupted by public ſchools) who would not naturally be diſpoſed to form early connections in life, if not deterred or withheld by the authority of others.

But pride, avarice, and all the train of criminal diſpoſitions which

ſlow from worldly mindedneſs, too often govern the ſpirit of parents and thoſe, who have the dominion over youth. Under the guiſe of prudence and the pretence of conſulting their happineſs, they diſcourage them from thinking of a family, becauſe this would interfere with the views of intereſt and ambition, which they propoſe to them. Compelled thus to a ſingle life, they naturally fall the victims of ſuch unhallowed reſtraints; and exceſs, intemperance, diſeaſe, and ruin often puniſh alike the pride of the parent, and the profligacy of the child.

Some indeed profeſs their deſire to ſee their children ſettled in marriage, but

but influenced by the ſame tempers, are inexorable, and furious, if their affections are placed on any perſon, however amiable and deſerving the object may be, whoſe rank or fortune in the ſcale of rigid equality will not keep the balance even. Thus croſſed and diſappointed, or urged on other connections, whilſt their affections are incapable of correſponding with the extorted obedience, a cure is ſought in diſſipation, or life forever embittered. I pretend not to vindicate the raſhneſs of imprudence, or to plead for the caprices of youthful folly, but I will venture to ſay, if parents only conſult the felicity of their children, they will be very jealous, how they thwart and

diſappoint them, where a little more or leſs fortune is the great propondérating objection. And it will, I am ſure be found, as a general truth, confirmed by univerſal experience, that if the happineſs of mankind, the good of ſociety, and the moral excellencies of the heart deſerve our firſt attention, they will all be much more effectually promoted by early marriages than by unnatural celibacy.

The ideas indeed uſually inſtilled into youth with ſuch diligence of the importance of wealth, and the neceſſity of keeping up the pride of life and family, are evidently as oppoſite to every principle of the goſpel, as deſtructive of the comfort of mankind,

kind, and the real benefit of ſociety. Muſt it be a maxim, that no man ſhall marry without previouſly poſſeſſing ſuch a proviſion for a family, as ſhall ſupercede all dependence on God, and his bleſſing? ſuch an idea is not only in itſelf irreligious, but relaxes all the ſinews of induſtry. What can ſo powerfully ſtimulate activity to exertion as the ſtrong affection to thoſe, who are ſo near and dear to us? ſo far therefore from having our proſpects marred by ſuch early marriage, as has often been ſuggeſted, none are ſo probable to approve themſelves diligent in their vocations, ſober, temperate, careful, in ſhort, in every view the moſt valuable citizens, as thoſe, who ſeeing

early in life a family around them, have the moſt forcible of all obligations to labour for them. And I believe general experience will admit, that induſtry and integrity united ſeldom fail of ſucceſs.

As a preſervative from vice, nothing can aſſuredly be ſo effectual as a wife of youth beloved, and ſuch a one, is more naturally to be expected from the determination of mutual affection, than from the mere bias of worldly conſiderations, too often made the baſis of ſuch connections.

With regard to the *real comfort of life*, what delights can celibacy and diſſipation, with all the purchaſed guilty gratifications

gratifications of appetite, give, compared with the pure enjoyments flowing from the poſſeſſion of one, whoſe affections center in you as her happineſs; and from the endearments felt in the tender careſſes of the precious pledges of virtuous love? Libertines and worldlings may ridicule, but theſe are joys they never knew, it is their curſe, as their crime to have deprived themſelves of them. And ſhall we be influenced in our judgment of beauty, by the blind?

The advantages reſulting to our country, if that name hath any thing dear to us are obvious. Since population is the ſtrength and proſperity of every ſtate, marriage ſhould meet

with every encouragement. All reſtrictions, except thoſe, which regard the notoriety of the fact, if not unchriſtian, are at leaſt highly impolitic. What is it to the community, if a rich heir ſometimes forms a connection with his inferior, or if a noble family's blood mixes with the more debaſed, but often purer current of plebeian deſcent? Admit it may be a particular or partial inconvenience, how much will it be overbalanced by the general freedom and liberty of ſociety, and the facilitating the legal union of the members thereof in wedlock?

But if the dictates of conſcience are to be obeyed, and the authority of

of God reſpected—if we view the matter in the light of religion, and look one ſtep beyond the grave—if we regard ſin, as the firſt of human miſeries, and to be preſerved from it, ſhould be the grand object of our care—If it be among the firſt of duties to God and man to keep ourſelves pure—then muſt we neceſſarily have recourſe to marriage, "which "is honourable in all, and the bed "undefiled."* becauſe formed as we are, (with few, very few exceptions, and for the truth of the obſervation I appeal to every conſcience) there is a moral impoſſibility of being preſerved from the ſins of the fleſh, and eternal death the wages, without having re-

 courſe

* Heb. xiii. 4.

courſe to the means which God hath appointed and ſanctified.

To avoid raſh, fooliſh, improper, haſty connections, is wiſdom, is duty, but every engagement, which pride and worldly mindedneſs calls by theſe names, may not really be ſuch. And if the choice is not always capable of vindication at the bar of rigid prudence, (I wiſh to ſpeak with all real deference to parental authority) yet when perſons come to the years, which their country allows to be thoſe of diſcretion, and to ſuch years, I ſuppoſe the perſon arrived, he ought to be able to judge better, what will contribute to his real felicity, than any other perſon can do for

for him, and who cannot be in any wiſe ſo intereſted in the conſequences, as himſelf.

The ſcriptures have clearly decided reſpecting the choice of a partner, leaving the inclination free and uncontrouled as to the object, ſubject only to one reſtraint, "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,"* and ſtating but one indiſpenſible qualification, "only in the Lord,"† The motives, which influence corrupted men find no admiſſion there, indeed it is impoſſible that a book, which inculcates the neceſſity of renouncing the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, ſhould ever

* 2 Cor. vi. 14. † 1 Cor. viii. 39.

ever make theſe, the leading conſiderations, in forming the neareſt and moſt endeared of all connections.

I preſume not to fix any preciſe period for marriage, or to ſuppoſe that ſuch can, or ought to be fixed. The point I urge, is only this, that whenever ſtrong inclination leads to ſuch an union—when no other objections ariſe, than ſuch as are merely earthly—whether from our own unbelieving fears, reſpecting a proviſion—or more commonly from thoſe, who pretend to intereſt themſelves for us—When our affections fix on a perſon to whom there lies no ſcriptural objection—but who is ſuch a one as the book of God admits, as a ſuitable

able helpmate for us—if we obey not the dictates of innocent desire, and the ordinance of God, it is justly to be apprehended, and I believe it will be verified in the experience of all, who seriously reflect, that consequences will result of a worse and more afflictive nature from celibacy, than any, which we might have encountered in the purity of marriage, and the provision for a family.

ESSAY XVI.

ON PSALMODY.

MANY are "the ſigns which follow thoſe that believe." The ſound and ſcriptural line of judgment is clear, "by their fruits ye ſhall know "them."* Theſe fruits appear in our *intercourſe with men*, and in the ſtate of communion, in which *we walk with God*. Both equally engage the attention of every real Chriſtian, but the acts

* Matt. vii 20.

acts of charity towards men, however neceſſary, are perhaps more equivocal, and their principle leſs evident: whilſt thoſe, which more immediately reſpect God, afford a ſtronger characteriſtic of the relation which we bear to him.

The faithful are therefore peculiarly diſtinguiſhed by *praying always*,* and *in every thing giving thanks*,† the one, the dutiful expreſſion of their dependence, the other the grateful acknowledgment of the mercies, which they are receiving, and of the hopes, with which they are inſpired.

The

* Eph. vi. 18. † 1 Theſſ. v. 18.

The natural expreſſion of joy is melody. "Is any merry? let him "ſing pſalms."* They who feel delight in God, make him their gladneſs, and the ſubject of their ſongs, whilſt "the mouth praiſeth him with "joyful lips."† It would be more ſurpriſing, if it was leſs common (or ſhall I ſay, moſt ſurpriſing, that it is ſo common) to obſerve the general brand ſtamped on every exerciſe of divine praiſe. Does any perſon ſpeak out his happy ſenſations alone, or among his brethren "in pſalms and "hymns and ſpiritual ſongs,"‡ the ſound will be no ſooner heard, than the judgment will be deciſively formed,

* James v. 13. † Pſalm lxiii. 5.
‡ Eph. v. 19.

formed, concerning thoſe, who do ſuch things. This is uſually regarded even in the world called Chriſtian, as the infallible ſymptom of an enthuſiaſtic ſpirit, and by many eſteemed, as but one ſtep from madneſs.

Hence among the criterions, which have marked the revivals of ſpiritual religion, as hymns and pſalm-ſinging have always attended them (and indeed it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe) this has as generally ſtruck the ſcoffers, and been the ſubject of their contempt and ridicule.

But if in the gaiety of folly, ſongs are expreſſive of the ſpirit, which animates the impure, the jovial and the humorous:

humorous: and Chloe, or the flowing bowl can be celebrated in the tender ſtrains of love, or the boiſterous ſounds of merriment; is it really ſo abſurd a thing, if a nobler theme awaken our joy, and the ſoul, that delighteth itſelf in God, takes pleaſure in telling of his ſalvation, and "ſeven times a day praiſeth him for "all his righteous judgments."*

To praiſe God with our lips, to make him the daily ſubject of our ſongs, is a duty, which nature dictates, as well as grace. It is the ſound concluſion of natural reaſon, that favours received, call for gratitude, and the greateſt favours, from the

* Pſalm cxix. 164.

the higheſt of beings, in a peculiar manner demand ſuch acknowledgments. Do the valleys laden with fertility "laugh and ſing,"* and ſhall not thoſe who reap the produce, own, theſe are thy gifts O God, "thou "openeſt thy hand and filleſt all "things living with plenteouſneſs."† I confeſs, nature is at preſent in a ſtate grievouſly corrupt, and therefore inſtead of acknowledging nature's God, the beſtower of "life and "breath and all things,"‡ we are too apt to abuſe his mercies; to pervert the gift, and forget the giver. But this, however common is unnatural, and contrary to the avowed relation, in

* Pſalm lxv. 14. † Pſalm cxlv. 16.
‡ Acts xvii. 25.

in which we ſtand towards him, "in "whom we live and move and have "our being."*

Divine grace aſſuredly teaches the language of praiſe. "It becometh "well the juſt to be thankful." This is the return which we are called upon to render, for all his goodneſs, "the "fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto "his name,"† and he is pleaſed graciouſly to accept this our bounden duty and ſervice. "He that offereth "me praiſe, he glorifieth me."‡ The ſubjects for praiſe abundantly offer themſelves to the view of the redeemed; in providence and grace, in

* Acts xvii. 28. † Heb. xiii. 15.
‡ Pſalm l. 23.

in time, and to eternity, they are ſo many and ſo great, ſo vaſt in extent and ſo infinite in duration, that we can turn on no ſide, nor meet an object around us, if our minds are heavenly diſpoſed, that will not awaken a ſpirit of thankſgiving in the houſe of our pilgrimage. All the ranſomed from the earth travelling in the highway to glory have "returned to Zion "with ſongs;"* and acknowledged it their high privilege, as well as bounden duty "in every thing to give "thanks." "I will ſing of mercy "and of judgment: unto thee, O "Lord, will I ſing."†

Nor

* Iſai. xxxv. 10. † Pſalm ci. 1.

Nor can it I think be doubted, "that a joyful and pleaſant thing it "is to be thankful."* The heart "can hardly be but in a happy frame, when "ſinging and making melody "unto the Lord."† and ſuppoſing a ſenſe of his "love really there ſhed "abroad,‡ the expreſſion of it in the lips is as pleaſing, as it is proper. Many have attempted to ſtamp the practices of Chriſtians as ridiculous. By what rule are they to be judged? and what is the teſt of rationality? The relations of nature, the book of God, the influence of divine grace, all lead to this practice as excellent in itſelf, and conducive to real bleſ-

 ſedneſs:

* Pſalm cxl. 1. † Eph. v. 19.
‡ Rom. v. 5.

ſedneſs: all the faithful have been found in the uniform exerciſe of praiſe, and proved the joy of the Lord to be their ſtrength; living and dying they have taſted the bleſſedneſs of this ſervice. Compaſſed with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes we need not be much out of countenance at the ſneer of folly; but reſolve "to ſing and "give praiſe with the beſt member "which we have." If it conſtitutes a part of the bleſſedneſs of heaven, will it make our days upon earth leſs delightful? and if we begin here to give ſalvation and praiſe to him, that ſitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb, ſhall we be leſs prepared to ſurround that throne with never ending praiſes?

But

But the advantage is ſingular as well as the pleaſure. In no way perhaps is divine knowledge more deeply fixed in the memory, and the impreſſion more tenderly communicated to the heart, than by ſacred poetry, whether the rhyme affords a greater facility of remembrance, or the images ſtrike more forcibly the imagination, or the ſhortneſs of a hymn, is more readily retained, than a diſcourſe, which ever of theſe be the caſe, it is ſurpriſing to obſerve the very great number of hymns which I have known remembered, and by many who were incapable of reading, but by hearing the ſame hymn repeatedly ſung and read, they have been able to ſtore up the words in

their memory, and to join with the congregation, and often times to chear their labours, with one of the ſongs of Zion, and to ſpeak of the things, which have deſcribed the king, eternal, immortal, inviſible.

Of all the proſe clafficks, which in my younger years I have read, the remembrance is very faint, and ſcarce a ſentence remains impreſſed on my memory; but multitudes of paſſages from Virgil, Horace, and Perſius, are ſtill ready to ſuggeſt themſelves, on occaſion, to my mind, as if the authors were daily in my hands.

That

That ſounds have a powerful effect upon bodies organiſed as ours, cannot be doubted. Nor is the complicated harmony of many parts, I apprehend, ſo ready to make a deep impreſſion, as ſimple melody, eſpecially accompanied by words, containing important truths and expreſſive of them. I could venture to appeal to the hearts of mankind in general, if there is not ſomething very ſtriking and affecting in the ſinging of ſome congregations; and that it is hardly poſſible to hear it, without ſenſibility. Every help to true devotion is deſireable; every means of quickening our affections, and leading them up to the proper object, is to be employed: and what hath a

more direct tendency to conduce to this bleſſed end, than the ſong, of which Jeſus, his perſon, redemption, grace and glory is the theme? What more likely to kindle a ſimilar flame, than the words and ſounds conveyed to the ear, and to the heart, by the united chorus of thoſe who have "taſted that the Lord is gracious," and "ſing with the ſpirit, and ſing "with the underſtanding alſo."*

I rejoice to be able to bear teſtimony of the bleſſing, which I have often received hereby, in my own ſoul; and I have found innumerable witneſſes to the ſame truth. Many times have I received the dying requeſts

* 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

queſts of my dear people, departing in the Lord, deſiring at their interment, that hymns which they named might be ſung over them; and with this reaſon given, that ſuch words, and ſuch a hymn, have often adminiſtered to them much delight and refreſhment, in the days of their pilgrimage.

As it will therefore be found highly conducive to the comfort and edification of every gracious ſoul to ſing and give praiſes unto the Lord: it will eſpecially become the miniſters of the ſanctuary, who have a real ſolicitude to promote the preſent and eternal bleſſedneſs of the people committed to their care, to cultivate theſe preci-

ous

ous means of grace: and contribute to the comfort, as well as edification of their flocks, by inſtructing them in this ſacred work, and ſelecting thoſe hymns and pſalms moſt calculated to produce gracious impreſſions on the conſcience, and fix the great truths of redemption on the heart.

The miniſtry as a trade is a wretched employment, it muſt be irkſome in itſelf, and render men moſt contemptible in the ſight of others, when the great ends of the ſacred function are unattended to. Thoſe who preach and pray, and ſing, or make an appearance of doing ſo, without receiving any bleſſing on their own ſouls, or expecting or experiencing

periencing any bleſſing to reſult from their labours to the ſouls of others, are indeed of all men moſt miſerable: bound to a taſk, in which they have no pleaſure, and from which they have never ſeen any beneficial effects, nor ever deſired to ſee them. But a true miniſter of the ſanctuary moved by the Holy Ghoſt to undertake the arduous employment, and bleſſed by the Spirit in the faithful diſcharge of his work, rejoices with thoſe, who ſhall be his joy "and crown of rejoicing in "the day of the Lord Jeſus."* He is the example of his own doctrine, and prays and ſings, with thoſe, whom he wiſhes to engage in the ſame gracious exerciſes; and thus watering others, he

* 1 Theſſ. ii. 19.

he is watered himſelf, "growing up "into him in all things, which is the "head, even Chriſt."*

Methodiſm! rank Methodiſm! Is it ſo? Then I am ſure an obnoxious name, had never a more honourable teſtimony borne to its excellence. Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.

* Eph. v. 15.

FINIS.